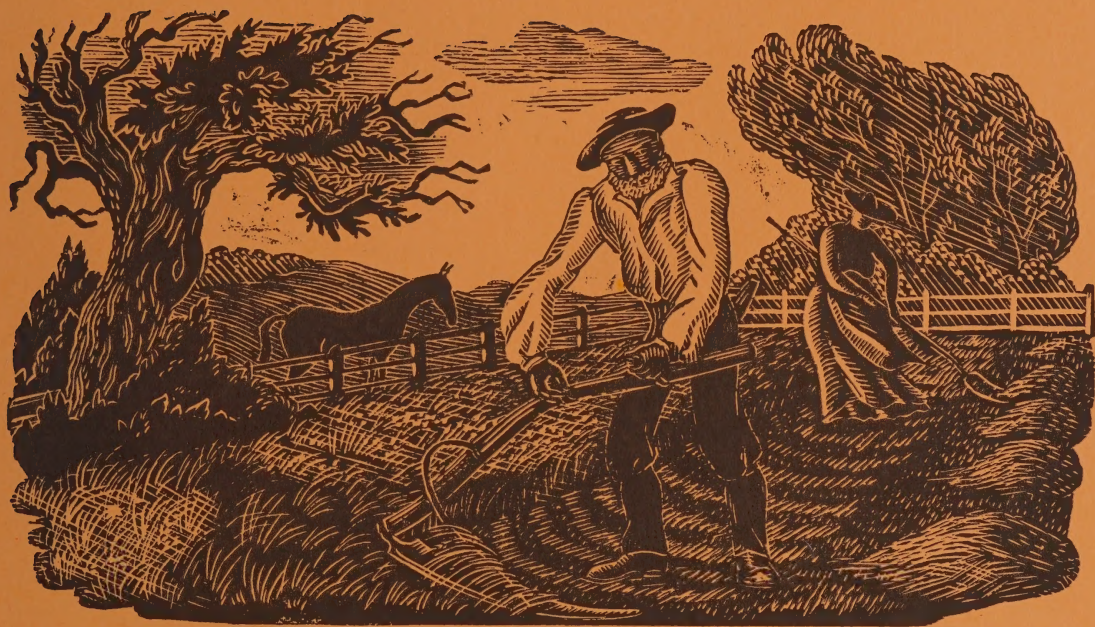


# *The Ryedale Historian*

*Number 21*

*2002-2004*



*Helmsley Archaeological  
and Historical Society*

*Cover illustration: Cutting corn. Wood engraving by Julie Nield from "Lark Rise to Candleford" by Flora Thompson, Oxford University Press and Readers' Union, 1947. See page 18.*



*A Periodical Publication by the  
Helmsley Archaeological and  
Historical Society*

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## Editorial

The number of articles proposed for inclusion in *The Ryedale Historian* continues to exceed the space available with the happy result that this editorial is necessarily brief. Profound relief must be expressed that, at the time of writing, the foot and mouth epidemic appears to be over. The closing of footpaths meant the Society's activities had to be severely curtailed. There could be no digging at Blandsby Park in the summer of 2001 and most of the outings had to be rearranged. Cawthorn Camps stood out in this desolate scene as the only place in the southern area of the National Park where walkers were allowed.

But the new season brings much interest. Having completed its programme of large scale works at Whitby Abbey, including the restoration of the unique hard garden, English Heritage hopes to provide Helmsley Castle with facilities it has hitherto lacked. Levisham Moor, long in the ownership of the North York Moors National Park Authority, is scheduled to become an Ancient Monument. Helmsley Archaeological and Historical Society is now a registered charity capable of receiving funds and making grants. We welcome many new members.

Once again the Society expresses its thanks to the North York Moors National Park Authority and Ryedale District Council for their generous financial support in the publication of this journal.

Anne Taylor

### The Levisham Archive

Betty Halse writes; - When the contents of the old Parish Chests were taken for safe keeping to County Record Offices, they were saved from damage and destruction, but removed from their natural context. The Archive collection in Levisham Village Hall can, perhaps, be seen as an example of a new type of Parish Chest. Since a village group embarked on a local history project about ten years ago, a large quantity of local records have been amassed. These include transcripts of Parish registers and Census returns, summaries of about a hundred wills made between the years 1541 and 1800, a transcript of the Pauper Book kept by the Overseers of the Poor in the first half of the nineteenth century; together with a transcript of the Enclosure Award of 1770, a photocopy of the 1848 Tithe Map and transcript of the accompanying schedule - these, and a lot more beside. There are maps and photographs, newspaper cuttings and copies of published articles relating to the village. Everything in the collection is either a photocopy or computer-generated transcript, so that everything can be reproduced again if lost or damaged. Here, you can walk out of the door and explore the place that is documented within.

Recently this collection has been sorted into folders and indexed to make it easier of access. The hope is that it will keep growing - and also that it will be used. Anyone wishing to visit it, or with suggestions about its use, should contact Betty Halse, 01751 460356, e-mail [bhalse@levisham.fsnet.com.uk](mailto:bhalse@levisham.fsnet.com.uk).



*This is the first opportunity for the Ryedale Historian to pay tribute to Raymond Hayes who was one of its founders in 1963. He died in May 2000, a few weeks after the publication of the millennial issue. The photograph appeared first in Number 15 as part of the celebration of his 80th birthday. An account of his life and work appears opposite.*



## Raymond Harland Hayes, MBE, FSA

by Pete Wilson

Raymond Hayes, or his published work, will have been known to most readers of *The Ryedale Historian* from the earliest days of their interest in the history and archaeology of the area. Raymond was one of Yorkshire's leading amateur archaeologists and was described in print during his lifetime as a much loved and appreciated man by no less a figure than Professor Philip Rahtz (Rahtz 1988). Even that accolade, accurate as it was, is perhaps insufficient to emphasize the scale of Raymond's contributions to his chosen subject through field work, excavation and publication. Contributions which put most colleagues, including many professionals, to shame.

Raymond was born in York, the only son of William and Margaret Hayes. William, an artist and professional photographer, moved his family to the village of Hutton-le-Hole on the North York Moors where he established a successful photographic business. On leaving school in 1925 Raymond joined the family business, returning to it in 1938 after an interlude working for another photographer in Huddersfield. The Second World War led to a decline in his photographic business and Raymond was forced to supplement his income by taking work as the Hutton postman, but this, like photography was to serve him well. The extensive contacts he built up gave him unrivalled access to sites in the region.

Raymond's interest in archaeology developed as a result of attending lectures by Wilfred Crosland, Philip Corder and others. As a skilled photographer he was asked to assist with the Elgee Bronze Age excavations at Loose Howe in 1937 (Elgee and Elgee 1949). And with Gilyard-Beer's Well Roman site in 1946-47 (Gilyard-Beer 1951), where he also participated as an archaeologist. In 1947 Raymond also assisted with work on the Town House site in Malton, including acting as site photographer (Mitchelson 1964). The Town House photographs were described by Professor Sir Ian Richmond as some of the best he had seen, a compliment that was, understandably, recalled with affection by Raymond. In the early 1950s Raymond also acted as site photographer on the late Peter Wenham's classic Roman cemetery excavations at Trentholme Drive in York (Wenham 1968).

An association with Malton Museum led Raymond to contribute substantially to our understanding of the archaeology of Malton and Norton. He assisted with the Museum collections and also undertook excavations and watching briefs, notably in Norton where, with Sir Edward Whitley, he excavated Roman kilns under rescue conditions and laid the foundations for our

understanding of an important third-century pottery industry (Hayes and Whitley 1950, Hayes 1988, 72-77). A series of Hayes photographs taken on a visit to the site represent almost the only record of work undertaken on the Roman town of *Cataractonium* (Catterick) in 1958 (see Wilson, forthcoming, plates 46-51).

In Ryedale and on the North York Moors, Raymond directed archaeological work on sites of all periods. In many cases working in a private capacity with a group of friends and minimal resources, but without exception, he published the results. It is invidious to pick out particular pieces of work as worthy of mention, but some must be cited to underline his achievements: the archaeological chapters and appendices of a *History of Rievaulx and District* (McDonnell 1963). *The Chambered Cairn and adjacent monuments on Great Ayton Moor North East Yorkshire* (Hayes 1967); and *Levisham Moor: Archaeological Investigations* (Hayes 1983) all stand out. Collaboration with J G Rutter, then Curator of Scarborough Museum, led to *Wade's Causeway: a Roman road in North East Yorkshire* (Hayes and Rutter 1964); *Cruck framed buildings in Ryedale and Eskdale* (Hayes and Rutter 1972) and *Rosedale Mines and Railways* (Hayes and Rutter 1974). The collaborations with Jim Rutter provide a series of classic studies that have stood the test of time and provide the foundations for more recent work by others. If these were not enough to demonstrate the range of his interests and scholarship in his *North East Yorkshire Studies* (Hayes 1988) contains monograph covered subjects from Mesolithic flints to Post-medieval pottery kilns, by way of Iron Age and Roman sites and a medieval farmstead. In addition two 'local histories' on Rosedale and Hutton-le-Hole, the latter written with J Hurst, display a scholarship lacking in many such ventures and represent best-sellers running to three editions each.

Much of the foregoing emphasises the depth of Raymond's commitment to the Ryedale area, however his achievements cannot be dismissed as merely parochial. A founder member of the Helmsley Archaeological Society, he published in thirteen of the first seventeen volumes. These papers included two studies of querns *Ryedale Historian* (Hayes 1971, 1976), which laid the foundation for a collaboration with Professor J E Hemingway and Dr D A Spratt that led to the publication in 1980 of a landmark paper 'The distribution and lithology of beehive querns in North East Yorkshire' in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* (Hayes, Hemingway and Spratt 1980). Raymond's comprehensive knowledge of the archaeology of his beloved North York Moors allowed him to introduce Professor G Dimbleby to sites that were crucial in the latter's pioneering work in the late 1950s on the analysis of pollen from archaeological context (Dimbleby 1961) His involvement with professional archaeology continued in the 1960s when he worked with Dr Ian



Stead and Tony Pacitto at Beadlam villa and on various Iron Age and Roman sites in Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire and elsewhere.

In addition Raymond taught numerous evening classes around Ryedale and the North York Moors infecting many with his enthusiasm for our common archaeological heritage. However Raymond's interests extended far beyond archaeology to take in buildings, flora, fauna, folk-lore and legend, particularly those of the North York Moors. His earliest publications appeared in *The British Caver* (Hayes 1942, 1944) and his archaeological publications on the *Ryedale Windypits* (Hayes 1955, 1962; 1987; Hayes and Rutter 1955; McDonnell 1963, 355-372) are crucial to the knowledge of these enigmatic and challenging sites. His enthusiasm for Ryedale and his subject led him to publish for a wider audience in *The Dalesman* on 'Roseberry Topping', 'A Folk Museum for Ryedale' and 'A Farndale Cruck house' (Hayes 1960, 1964, 1979). A somewhat different role was as author of two editions of the *Kirkbymoorside District Official Guide* (Hayes 1965, Hayes and Rush 1970).

Raymond's achievements were recognized by a day-school in his honour in 1988, the Presidency of the Scarborough Archaeological Society in the 1980s, election as a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1979 and the award of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's Silver Medal in 1990. His achievements were celebrated in a collection of papers on the archaeology of North East Yorkshire entitled *Moorland Monuments* (Vyner 1995) to jointly honour him and his friend and collaborator, the late Don Spratt.

If it is possible to look beyond what Raymond did to what he gave, a different facet of his character is revealed, his generosity of spirit. He willingly assisted researchers and students working on 'his' patch, providing first-hand knowledge, access to his archive and much useful advice.

Innumerable publications, both archaeological and non-archaeological have benefited from the inclusion of Raymond's photographs and his own publication list of some ninety monographs, journal articles and extended notes stands as permanent testimony to his unrivalled academic contribution (Wilson and Cooper 1995). Equally his archive, both archaeological and photographic, now largely housed at the Ryedale Folk Museum, provides a continuing resource for scholars and students. Raymond was one of the founders of the Museum and for many years a Trustee and it is fitting that its archaeological displays are housed in the Raymond Hayes Gallery and are based largely on his finds.

As Honorary Correspondent for the Ordnance Survey from the 1940s Raymond worked with C W Phillips

carefully annotating 6" map sheets with corrections and the location of new finds and sites. His prolific corrections and additions led to the award of an MBE in 1966 and the maps still form a unique archive of archaeological knowledge.

In his later years Parkinson's Disease gradually took its toll, but for many years failed to lessen his enthusiasm or dull his intellect. Visits to Raymond were always stimulating, full of humour and fascinating insights on sites, finds and people. Even when it was no longer possible to load him and his wheelchair into a car he remained intensely interested in archaeology and the wider world. His friends will continue to miss him and researchers will be forever in his debt. Raymond however has at least one additional contribution to make; in the mid 1960s he produced a typescript *History of Farndale*. It has never been formally published and a version of it is being prepared for publication in 2002 through the Ryedale Folk Museum and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society as a tribute to Raymond and his achievements.

Raymond Harland Hayes MBC FSA, born July 13 1909, died 16 May 2000.

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## Two Farms “held by arrow” in Bransdale: Loft House and Smout House 1282-1952

by Isabel Anne McLean

In terms of the historical record<sup>1</sup> this article sets out to explore the roots of an incredible story which has circulated among members of the native farming population in the Kirkbymoorside area from the early 20th century to the present day. In brief, it tells of a bet in the 19th century between Lord Feversham of the Duncombe Park estate and a tenant farmer in Bransdale. I have heard different versions in which the farmer won his farm by shooting a pigeon or a goose or a pheasant sitting on a wall or a water trough or a boulder on the daleside. The farm is said to have been “the one where there’s a sundial standing in the field.” This was Loft House (at SE626975). I have found only one printed version of the story and suspect that the tale gained currency from *Yorkshire Moors and Dales* by Alfred P Wilson, published in 1910:

Concerning [Bransdale] the following story is told:- “Centuries ago, the Squire and a dalesman, Scarth by name, were out shooting. While they were walking along the side of the dale the Squire, who believed himself to be no mean archer, suddenly exclaimed: ‘I’ll wager this farm that I can shoot better than you.’ The other agreed. Accordingly a goose was fastened to a post on the hillside, a mile or so away, and they prepared to shoot. The Squire shot first, but his three arrows were all wide of the mark. It was now his companion’s turn, and, after choosing his best arrow, and taking good aim, he shot the bird through the neck. ‘The farm is yours,’ said the Squire; and to this day Scarth’s descendants possess the farm, and their tenure is called ‘arrow-hold.’”<sup>2</sup>

This story must have been an attempt to explain a practice whose roots in history had been lost. The ritual was recorded by our local historian, Thomas Parker, who noted in 1858 that a Bransdale freeholder “attends the Manorial Court of Kirby armed with a Bow and arrow; an [h]omage which [h]is ancestors had paid, Annually to that court.”<sup>3</sup> These references to the manor court and the homage provide clues to the distant, historical origin of the later folklore.

In 1282 an inquisition post-mortem for “Kerkeby Moresheved” listed the “Free Tenants” of the manor. “Nicholas, son of Robert Nussaunt, holds one messuage and one great close (*j magnam claustram*) in Braunsdale, and pays one arrow at Easter for all

service.”<sup>4</sup> Both Nicholas’ brother, Richard, and their father were also free tenants – that is, freeholders whose tenure might be accompanied by some small but essential payment or obligation or service to the lord of the manor. In the feudal system socage or freehold was ownership but it was not quite absolute. In law, Nicholas Nussaunt was actually obliged to present the arrow to the lord of the manor of Kirkbymoorside each Easter. The Nussaunts surely descended from Odo and his son Nissant de Fadmore who figured in Fadmoor’s history in 1190 and 1219 (Rushton<sup>5</sup> and Hayes<sup>6</sup>).

In 1569, after the Rising of the North, Humberstone’s survey<sup>7</sup> of the lands of the northern earls focused again on free tenants in Kirkbymoorside manor. In Bransdale James Wood held a messuage, a barn and three closes in free socage for a barbed arrow. By charter, John Wood had a tenement and three closes called “Lofthouse” in free socage for a barbed arrow (*sagitt barbut*). The survey showed that since 1282 the arrow tenures had increased from one to two. Whether this was the result of the original holding being divided, perhaps by an owner dying with underage heirs or no heirs at all, we cannot know. A glance at Bransdale on any map reveals immediately the oddity of these two houses lying only thirty-five yards apart from each other while all the other farms are regularly spaced out around the dale.

In 1610 another survey of the manor of Kirkbymoorside showed a further development. The two messuages in Bransdale were still in the hands of the Wood family but now both houses were given names: “William Wood holdeth there one messuage called loftehouse, and the other smotehouse, and payeth yearly for the same a broad Arrow and the head and sute of courte.”<sup>8</sup> Though he owned two farms, he paid only one broad arrow head. Notwithstanding “Mote House” being given in a prestigious HMSO publication, to my eye there is clearly an “s” at the start of the second house name in the 1610 manuscript. This mistranscription is the more unfortunate since the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England put a splendid colour photograph of “Smout House” on the front cover. The editors made no connection between “Smout House” on the cover and “Mote House” [sic] and Loft House in Bransdale whose terms of tenancies were mentioned among other medieval relics in the text.<sup>9</sup>

What was a barbed arrow (*sagitta barbata*)? Whereas an ordinary arrow was a willow wand with a sharp iron point capable of penetrating the protective clothing of an infantryman or a war horse, a barbed arrow had a much broader head which allowed for backward-facing hooks to be attached on one side or



on both sides. Once embedded, it could not be withdrawn without traumatic damage to the recipient's flesh. In *Tenures of Land and Jocular Customs of some Manors* (1679) Thomas Blount listed a good many of these arrow rents throughout Britain. In later editions a cluster of such rents was recorded in the parish of Peniston (north-east of present-day Sheffield), in the manors of Gunthwaite and Oxspring. For instance, in 1572 a farmer paid Godfrey Bosville, lord of the manor of Oxspring, "two grett brode arrows well hedyd, and barbed ordly."<sup>10</sup> It is possible that these rents occurred in iron-working areas (personal comment, John Rushton, formerly WEA history tutor of Pickering). It may be of relevance that one medieval bloomery has been recorded at the southern end of Bransdale (at SE649904) and another in Farndale (at SE678961). Hayes found a "Robert the Iron-smith of Farndale" in the Coucher Book (1310-12 AD).<sup>11</sup>

At some point in the 17th century Loft House and Smote (Smout) House passed from the Wood family. In 1685 Robert Todd, priest in Westerdale, left to his granddaughter, Mary Dale, "my part of that message... called Loft House."<sup>12</sup> Out of the yearly rent reserved to him he left £2 a year to Jane Hugill, the "natural daughter" of George Boyes and currently living at Loft House. Todd had bought his interest in the house from Boyes and was possibly honouring an arrangement with him. He did not own Loft House itself, but Boyes probably had done or still did.

### The 18th Century

It might be George Boyes' son who appeared annually in the Kirkbymoorside manor court call books<sup>13</sup> at the start of the next century. Smout House had passed meanwhile into the hands of Thomas Moon. This is what I deduce from the following entry under "Freeholders" in the call book for 1702-10:

*Thomas Moone } held by an Arrow*  
*Thomas Boyes }*

Until 1734 they continued to appear annually at the court as "Bransdale Freeholders" who "hold by Arrow". The same two names held their farms "by Arrow", bracketed together in the books, until 1764 but in fact deaths occurred and these were descendants or relatives of the men first listed in 1702. In 1736 "Thomas Moon late of Carlton but now of Bransdale" took out a second mortgage<sup>14</sup> on both Loft House and Smout House. How Thomas Moon (I) came to own both the arrow houses is not known. Boyes might have sold Loft House to Moon, or Boyes might have been Moon's tenant whilst owning freehold property elsewhere in the dale. On her father's death Elizabeth Moon inherited both Loft

House and Smout House, and arranged a further mortgage<sup>15</sup> with Richard Moon of Carlton in 1739. In 1745 another Thomas Moon of Carlton bought<sup>16</sup> a farm called Moor House in Bransdale. This was probably the brother<sup>17</sup> of the mortgagee, Richard Moon. Thomas Moon (II) may at the same time have come to own Smout House through Elizabeth Moon, since the call books listed a Thomas Moon as holding by arrow from 1751-64. As the call book for 1746-50 is missing, the expected entry, "admitted", cannot be checked. Elizabeth herself was never listed: a mystery.

In 1747 Elizabeth Moon sold<sup>18</sup> Loft House to Thomas Boyes (I) who already "occupied" the farm. The will<sup>19</sup> of Elizabeth Moon of Bransdale (the same woman?) left only small amounts of money in 1755. Buried at Cockan chapel in 1753, Thomas Boyes (I) left Loft House to his son, Thomas Boyes (II), stating that this was "all the Estate I now have... in Bransdale."<sup>20</sup> Thomas Moon (II) died<sup>21</sup> in 1773 and the name was gone from the call book for 1774-84, leaving only "Thos Boyes, held by Arrow". As Thomas Moon (II)'s will<sup>22</sup> left just Moor House to his heir, it is possible that he had previously sold Smout House to Boyes. A Duncombe Park estate map<sup>23</sup> of 1782 showed all of the land belonging to Loft House and Smout House as "Thomas Boyes's Land". After his death his heir, Thomas Boyes (III) of Kirkbymoorside, sold both Loft House and Smout House in 1788 to Isaac Scarth.

Thus the association of the Moon and Boyes families with the arrow houses ended. None of the wills or conveyances had mentioned the practice of presenting an arrow at the court. It had no legal force whatsoever. Only the court call books 1702-88 inform us of the continuance of the custom. Indeed, it is curious that it continued at all, since the *Tenures Abolition Act* of 1660 had finally abolished such services as legal obligations. However, some people chose to go on presenting sprigs of heather, white roses, gilt spurs, cummin seeds or whatever all over Britain, out of a liking for the old traditions.

### A Family called Scarth

In 1701 Jane Hill married John Scarth, parish priest of Danby in Cleveland ("Johannes Scarth Minister *ibid*" in the marriage register<sup>24</sup>). His incumbency, 1700-20, ended with his death at forty-two. A son, John Scarth (1706-85), came south over the moors to farm in Bransdale. He and his son appeared as tenants from 1765-84: "John Scarth and Isaac his son".<sup>25</sup> At the age of eighty John was buried at Cockan and entered in the parish register as "son of the Rev John Scarth".<sup>26</sup> The ecclesiastical connection was no doubt a matter of some pride, yet his son was incapable of signing his name in conveyances. In



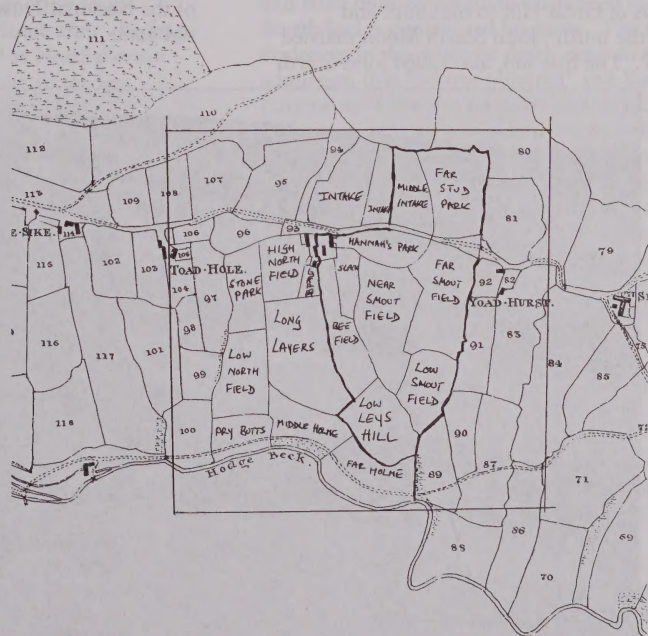
1780 Isaac (c1743-1800) bought<sup>27</sup> a small farm in Bransdale West Side called Helm House. Within two years of his father's death he had sold<sup>28</sup> Helm House and was tenant of Loft and Smout Houses. In April 1788 he purchased both farms from Thomas Boyes (III). The memorial of the lease and release gave a fairly full description of the properties:

Two Messuages... one of them commonly called by the name of Lofthouse[,] the other... Smouthouse and all those several Closes Intacks or parcels of Ground [called] the Long Leas, the Long Holme, the low Leas, the Low Bee Field, the high Bee Field, the Bee Field Slack, the hither Stud Park, the high Stud Park, the hither Smout Field, the far Smout Field, the low Smout Field, the Annas Park, the high North Field, the Stone Park, the Hagg Hole, the little North Field, the low North Field, the Pry Butts, the Cow house Garth... in the whole by estimation about Seventy Acres... and also all other the Messuages Dwelling houses Cottages [formerly belonging to Thomas Boyes] in Bransdale.<sup>29</sup>

(In fact it was Loft House which had the cottages, as was to become apparent in the Census of 1841). In a survey of 1796 Isaac Scarth appeared as a Duncombe Park tenant being charged over three shillings for "the lane to the moor and the lane to Yoad Hurst."<sup>30</sup> Since he served as one of the assessors on the manor court, it was the steward of the court who, in 1798, amerced his son: "John Scarth for stopping Water Course in Bransdale Bank 0-2-6."<sup>31</sup> Isaac Scarth enjoyed his

estate, "held by Arrow", for twelve years. In 1800 the call book entry changed to: "Isaac and (by Arrow) John Scarth." Isaac Senior had given his farms to these sons before his death. His will<sup>32</sup> gave a substantial annuity of £12 to his wife "in lieu of her Thirds of the Real freehold Estate."

John (c1770-1858) and Isaac (1772-1846) were listed as holding "by Arrow" from 1800-35, when the call books ceased to be kept as the manor court was infrequently convened. An estate map<sup>33</sup> of 1826 showed that Isaac farmed at Loft House, and John at Smout House; no field boundaries were drawn for their land. However, the Tithe apportionment (1847) and the Tithe map (1848) for Bransdale gave both boundaries and field names. As the map does not lend itself to reproduction, I have employed an estate map<sup>34</sup> of 1849 which gave the boundaries but no field numbers, the Scarths' fields being freehold. Into these spaces I have inserted the field names from the Tithe documents.<sup>35</sup> The names are the same as in 1788 with the exception of Annas Park being correctly spelt as Hannah's Park, the Bee Field Slack becoming merely Slack, and the two Bee Fields being amalgamated as one Bee Field. It is surprising to see that the three Smout Fields belonged to Loft House, but Near, Far and Low presumably described their proximity to, or distance from, Smout House. I have added a dark line to mark the boundary between the two farms at the time of the Tithe apportionment, according to which each farm consisted of forty-one acres.



Detail from: "Bransdale East Side" by J Wright (1849) with field names added from the Tithe apportionment (1847) and map (1848) of Farndale High Quarter and Bransdale East Side. North Yorkshire County Record Office. All fields within the dark line belonged to Loft House; fields adjoining belonged to Smout House.



### **Smout House from 1800: the change from Scarth to Moon ownership**

On marriage, both John and Isaac had children. John and Elizabeth Scarth's son, also called John, was born in 1797. A tall headstone in St Nicholas' churchyard today records his early death in 1823 at the age of twenty-five. The parents still had two daughters, Betty, born in 1795, and Mary, born in 1805. Betty had married<sup>36</sup> George Moon of Bransdale West Side (no immediate relative of the Moons who owned the arrow houses in the 18th century). It was their son, baptised<sup>37</sup> John Scarth in 1824, who would inherit Smout House eventually. By the age of fifteen (according to the Census for 1841) John Scarth Moon (1824-93) was already working there for his grandparents, John and Elizabeth. He married in 1848; his daughter's baptismal entry<sup>38</sup> gave his occupation as "farmer's servant" in Bransdale East Side. Though his grandparents were still alive in 1851, the Census showed him as a widower and head of the household at Smout House, farming thirty-four acres.

### **Smout House renamed Mount View**

John Scarth's will<sup>39</sup> attested to his prosperity, characterising him as "formerly farmer but late yeoman." He left £700 to his daughter Mary Scarth, and an annuity of £30 to his wife. John Scarth Moon duly inherited Smout House on his grandmother's death in 1859. From this time onwards it was to be called Mount View. It was presumably this first John Scarth Moon who altered the name. The house had splendid views of Groat Hill to the south and Cockayne to the north. John Scarth Moon married again in 1857. The first son, also called John Scarth

Moon (1858-1928), was followed by two more sons, George and Isaac, born 1860-62. Their father continued at Mount View until 1893, when John and Isaac took over. The 'Doomsday Book' of 1910<sup>40</sup> showed Mount View's rateable value as £20-15-0. The family had resisted incorporation into the Duncombe Park estate throughout a century in which the Fevershams had persistently bought up one small farm after another in Bransdale and had built their hunting lodge at Cockayne.

In March 1928 John Scarth Moon was buried at St Nicholas' church, a local newspaper reporting that he "had lived all his life at Mount View" and had been church warden for thirty years and school manager for forty.<sup>41</sup> His two nephews, George and Ernest Moon, attended his funeral with their father, Isaac. In November Isaac, suffering from cancer, shot himself underneath the kitchen table at Mount View.<sup>42</sup> A few days before his suicide his son, George Scarth Moon, had married Ivy Collier of High Bragg, Farndale. It is no wonder that in later life George would never talk to his children about his life at Mount View. In 1934 he left Bransdale. But his eldest child, Jim Scarth Moon, returns sometimes and can demonstrate how the spring water used to run off the moor and into a stone trough in the farmyard. Personally, I am convinced that the passage of the water under the track and through the dry-stone wall, is the provenance of the farm's odd name. In the local dialect there is the word smout: (verb) to creep under; (noun) a narrow passage, a hole in the bottom of a fence or a dry-stone wall. Now in the ownership of the National Trust, Smout House has resumed its old name.



*Smout House  
in Bransdale*



## Loft House from 1800

The Isaac Scarth (1772-1846) who owned Loft House at the time of his father's death in 1800, married the following year. His elder son was also Isaac (1803-63). In 1839 Isaac Senior conveyed Loft House to Isaac Junior and moved<sup>43</sup> across the dale to farm with his other son, William, who had bought Colt House in 1831.<sup>44</sup> The indenture<sup>45</sup> for Loft House in 1839 named all the fields. In 1824 Isaac Junior married<sup>46</sup> his cousin, Mary Scarth from Smout House. Their child, John Scarth,<sup>47</sup> (1834-91) inherited Loft House on his father's death in 1863.

## The Bransdale Outrage

Still a bachelor at forty, John Scarth held a 'pig killing' at Loft House on 31st January 1874, followed by the traditional feast. The guests included the Bransdale school master, Robert Johnson, seventy years old and "well respected in the dale," according to the *Scarborough Gazette* which subsequently reported the circumstances surrounding his death as "The Bransdale Outrage".<sup>48</sup> The cause of death was initially judged by a coroner's jury to have been "congestion of the lungs, brought on by exposure to cold". This was essentially the case; but when Lord Feversham heard of "the most filthy indignities" to which Johnson had been subjected prior to his death he insisted on an inquiry to discover who had been the perpetrator. The charge being indecent assault, on 8th May seven inhabitants of Bransdale testified<sup>49</sup> at Helmsley Petty Sessions as to what they had witnessed from the Saturday of the pig killing to the Tuesday of Johnson's death. William Baldwin, a farm labourer from Farndale who had come to Loft House after the feast, was as a result committed for trial at Northallerton Quarter Sessions. He pleaded guilty to the less serious charge of common assault and was sentenced<sup>50</sup> to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The witnesses' depositions provide an authentic glimpse of life in the remote dale at that time. Jane Sonley, widow and cowkeeper, saw Johnson "in his usual good health and spirits" at eight o'clock on Saturday evening before he set off for Loft House. After the pig killing, supper commenced in the kitchen at midnight; twelve guests then moved to the parlour where old Mrs Scarth brought in wine glasses and four bottles of gin. Johnson, after drinking neat gin for an hour, was so intoxicated as to be asleep or senseless. Baldwin unloosed Johnson's trousers and rubbed soot and grease over his private parts and then "blacked" his face in like manner. John Ward, a servant at Loft House, observed that "No one made any objection – I did not." Johnson remained asleep when Scarth gave orders for his face to be washed. Several men sat up all night, with Johnson sitting

unconscious in a chair. On Sunday morning he was carried into the hay house. This was the depth of winter: 1st February. John Scarth Moon Junior came from Mount View, where the school master was their lodger. He saw Baldwin come into the hay house, go to Johnson who was prone in the hay, and unloose his braces. Together with another of Scarth's servants, the sixteen-year-old saw Johnson's private parts black and shining in the light. (Why, in the cross-questioning, was such emphasis laid on the grease?) Moon went away but returned at three in the afternoon. Johnson was still lying on the hay and was now moaning. Tea was brought to him from John Moon's house. At four o'clock two men at last carried him back into Loft House where there was a fire. "He was unconscious and breathing hard." Then George Teasdale carried him on his back to Mount View where he appeared to recover. "Mr Moon asked him if he could walk [upstairs] to bed." He replied that he could. John Moon Junior recalled, "I saw Johnson in our house on Monday morning. He asked me for some water. I took him some. He did not complain about anybody." Other witnesses reported him apologising – "I have disgraced you all." On Monday night Emmanuel Barr, a neighbouring farmer, visited him and, at Moon's request, put a clean shirt on him and washed his face and hands. "They were black and greasy." By now Johnson was "rattling very much in his throat." Both Barr and Sonley went to his bedside on Tuesday. He was "sinking fast" and died at eight that night. He was buried on 7th February.<sup>51</sup>

Concern for Johnson came from the Moon family and Barr, none of whom had attended the feast. John Scarth had not protected his guest. The most chilling evidences in this pathetic death came in the open admission that "no one objected" and Barr's statement, "He was a humped back man." Johnson was a man of some education, was without family in Bransdale, could not hold his drink, was old and a hunchback: someone vulnerable to being picked on by a bully with a perverted sense of humour. The whole sorry incident highlighted the fact that life in the dales was harsh and customs sometimes brutish. Yet someone ensured that a substantial and appropriate headstone was raised over Johnson's grave.

ROBERT JOHNSON  
who died February 3rd 1874  
Aged 70 years

*And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice  
Lord lay not this sin to their charge.  
And when he had said this he fell asleep.  
HE WAS SCHOOL MASTER IN THIS  
PARISH 13 YEARS.*

The words of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr and a preacher (teacher), seem apposite from a



community which had betrayed its teacher. But perhaps Feversham paid for the stone, or the Moons: Johnson had been their lodger and had taught their son. The boy grew up to be school manager for Bransdale School for forty years

John Scarth went on to distinguish himself in various uncouth ways. When his mother died, he failed to add her name to his father's headstone. The blank space beneath Isaac's name and the date 1863 glares at the moors on Rudland Rigg: "Prepare to meet thy God." Isaac would have been the man whom Parker described as attending the manor court armed with a bow and arrow in the 1850s. John Scarth was to feature in a detailed version of the arrow story recorded on tape by William Featherstone of Farndale in 1980. As he worked his way through a rent book for Farndale and Bransdale East Side, dated 1837, Featherstone (born in 1896) related the farmers' names in the rent book to the anecdotes he had inherited about life in the dales:

There's John Scarth there! They owned their farm. There's two farms together there... They did farm that farm, did these Scarths, and they owned it. Actually, it was a farm belonging to Feversham, and this John Scarth that I've heard of, which could be this man or his descendant, - he was a very good hand at shooting with a bow and arrow. And he bet Lord Feversham that he could hit something, and Feversham bet this farm. If he could hit that thing with his bow and arrow, he would give him this farm. So he had a go and he hit it! And he won that farm! And it was called arrow-hold. It wasn't freehold. It was arrow-hold. And John Scarth had to go to Kirkby every year and get an arrow made at Newsome's - Newsome's, the tinsmith at the Tinley Garth corner there. And this man made him a tin arrow and that had to be presented at the Helmsley [estate] office every year. And that was all he paid. That was John Scarth. And he was a real poacher... They never did catch him.<sup>52</sup>

Newsome's, the ironmonger's, traded from the 1870s to the 1890s on the corner of Tinley Garth and Market Place. It is therefore possible that the arrow presentation continued until John Scarth's death in 1891.

According to Featherstone, John Scarth had been a keen churchman who hated Methodism. When a school was built on Rudland Moor but was subsequently turned into a Primitive Wesleyan chapel in 1874, with a datestone to that effect, he took pot shots at the stone with his gun until he had utterly defaced it. The new parish of Bransdale cum Farndale of 1871 had a curate whose parsonage was in the Loft House complex of buildings until the start of the First World War. Five years before his death, John Scarth married<sup>53</sup> Annie Wainwright, his domestic servant at Loft House. She was twenty-six years of age to his fifty-two, and six months pregnant. Their twins, Malcolm and Muriel, were born on 3rd February 1887. Mrs Annie Scarth raised them at Loft House, renting out the farmland. In 1910 Thomas Ringrose had it together with a cottage attached to Loft House.<sup>54</sup> In that year Muriel Scarth was about to marry the Farndale school master, Alfred Percy Wilson - the author of Yorkshire Moors and Dales. So it becomes evident from whom Wilson heard the story about the Squire and the Scarth of (supposedly) centuries before! The book advised walkers: "comfortable lodgings may be obtained at Mrs Scarth's." The Bransdale Roll of Honour in St Nicholas' church lists A P Wilson and Charles Earl of Feversham, as those who gave their lives in the First World War.

### The end of Loft House

This left Muriel Wilson with four children. An attractive woman, she poses for the camera in front of a bay window at Loft House in a photograph owned by a descendant today. When she died in 1946, her brother sold Loft House at auction. Lord Feversham bought it, together with the barn and two cottages in the yard. During 1951-2 everything was demolished, the stone being carted away to enlarge Pennyholme in Sleightholme Dale. (I am obliged to Ray Parker of Fadmoor for the dates). A datestone from the Loft House complex was transferred to Pennyholme and re-set over a west-facing door. (John Wood of White Sykes, who died in 1997, told me this history). It seems to read: TG 1710. The site of Loft House is now empty save for some stone footings. Lines by Herbert Read come to mind:

*About here it must have been  
But there is nothing left  
nothing left of Moon's Farm.  
There was a clump of pines  
The last trees before the heather began  
And a stone trough  
to gather the clear water from a rill...*

*Not a stone or stick of it left!  
That's a mystery  
how completely a solid structure  
like a farm house  
can vanish in fifty years!  
The stones they would carry off  
to make a new road...*



Read wrote *Moon's Farm. A Dialogue for Three Voices* (1951) as an elegy for Bransdale. He had in mind a farmhouse other than Loft House, and took the name from the datestone of Cornfield House ("William Moon 1827"). But his Third Voice, "the sense of the past", would have relished the irony of the passage of six centuries during which the production of fearsome barbed arrow heads from Loft House had degenerated into the purchase of tin arrows from an ironmonger's shop.

## Notes and Queries

- 1) When Elizabeth Moon sold Loft House in 1747 the indenture named the fields as Stud Park, High North, Low North, Stone Park, Pry Butts and Cowhouse Garth. When Boyes (II) honoured a mortgage<sup>55</sup> on Loft House in 1781 these same fields were listed. These are the earliest sources for Loft House's field names; yet these same names are listed as belonging to John Scarth (ie at Smout House) in the Tithe apportionment of 1847. Can it be that some muddle occurred over the farms' names post-1781? There is also the anomaly of Loft House having three fields called Smout (Near, Far and Low).
- 2) A stone pillar stands in Hannah's Park ("Sun Dial" on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 6-inch map of 1857). The original dial face (of what date?) was stolen but a copy substituted in 1996 by the National Trust. It reads "GAM & JMM". Whose initials are these? Might they represent the Christian names of Muriel Wilson's family? (eg husband Alfred, father John, brother Malcolm, daughter Marjorie).

## Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge permission from the North Yorkshire County Record Office to reproduce details from three maps in the Duncombe Park Estate archive (ZEW/M). I thank the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, for permission to quote from documents in their care. My thanks go to Chris Evans of Brompton who gave me the *Scarborough Gazette* report some years ago.

- <sup>1</sup> **Preliminary Note** (i) All ZEW references are to the Duncombe Park estate archive at the North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO). (ii) I have constructed a family tree of the Scarth family 1700-1900, and of the Moon family 1786-1939. As family trees interest only genealogists, I do not give them but they allow me to steer a course through the generations of Scarths, Moons and Scarth Moons. Data comes from parish registers, primarily Kirkbymoorside (PR/KMO at NYCRO)

and Kirkdale (PR/KRD). Many endnotes refer to PR/KMO because Loft House and Smout House lay in Bransdale East Side, in Kirkbymoorside parish (until the creation in 1871 of the parish of Bransdale cum Farndale). Bransdale West Side lay in Kirkdale parish. Most ceremonies nonetheless took place in Bransdale's ancient Cockan chapel, rebuilt and renamed 'St Nicholas' in 1886.

- <sup>2</sup> Alfred P Wilson, *Yorkshire Moors and Dales*, A Brown & Sons, Hull, 1910, p18.
- <sup>3</sup> Ms 'History of Kirkdale', 1858, Ryedale Folk Museum; also typed transcript, RFM, 1380, p51.
- <sup>4</sup> *Yorkshire Inquisitions*, I, YAS Record Series XII, p249.
- <sup>5</sup> John Rushton, 'Keldholme Priory: the Early Years', *Ryedale Historian*, No 1, Apr 1965, p19.
- <sup>6</sup> Raymond Hayes, 'The Story of Gillamoor & Fadmoor', *Ryedale Historian*, No 4, Apr 1969, p15.
- <sup>7</sup> ZEW IV 1/1.
- <sup>8</sup> Royal Inquisition of Kirkbymoorside, ZEW IV 1/2.
- <sup>9</sup> *Houses of the North York Moors*, HMSO, 1987, p7.
- <sup>10</sup> W Carew Hazlitt, *Tenures of Lands and Customs of Manors*, 5th edn, edd A W and C Barsby, Epsom, 1999, p271.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ryedale Historian*, No 4, Apr 1969, p13.
- <sup>12</sup> 'Testamentary Documents of Yorkshire Peculiars', *Miscellanea*, YAS Record Series LXXIV, pp62-64.
- <sup>13</sup> Kirkbymoorside manor call books 1702-1835, ZEW III 6/1-13.
- <sup>14</sup> 12 Nov 1736, North Riding Register of Deeds (NRRD), NYCRO, A/279/331.
- <sup>15</sup> 8 May 1739, NRRD, F/223/220.
- <sup>16</sup> 8 May 1745, NRRD, N/423/512.
- <sup>17</sup> See the registered copy of Richard Moon of Bransdale's will, probate 9 Jan 1750/51, Borthwick, Probate Register v94, f267.
- <sup>18</sup> 1 May 1747, NRRD, T/451/609.
- <sup>19</sup> Eliz Moon of Bransdale, probate 8 May 1755, Borthwick, Prob Reg v99, f128.
- <sup>20</sup> 4 Sep 1753, NRRD, W/114/70.
- <sup>21</sup> Buried at Cockan, 7 Feb 1773, PR/KMO 1/24.
- <sup>22</sup> Thomas Moon of Bransdale, probate Mar 1773, Borthwick, Prob Reg v117, f238.
- <sup>23</sup> Map of Lands in Bransdale, J Tuke, 1782, ZEW M/7.
- <sup>24</sup> 12 Nov 1701, PR/DAN 1/1.
- <sup>25</sup> ZEW III 6/8-9.
- <sup>26</sup> Bapt 7 Apr 1706, PR/DAN 1/1; bur 30 Jul 1785, PR/KMO 1/23.
- <sup>27</sup> Petch to Scarth, 3 and 4 Jul 1780, NRRD, BS/108/189.
- <sup>28</sup> Scarth to Ruddock, 8 and 9 May 1787, NRRD, CC/180/318.
- <sup>29</sup> Boyes to Scarth, 4 and 5 Apr 1788, NRRD, CC/515/817.
- <sup>30</sup> Survey of the manor of Kirkbymoorside, 1796,

- p100, ZEW IV 1/11.  
Oct 1798, ZEW III 3.  
Isaac Scarth of Bransdale, probate Nov 1800,  
Borthwick, Prob Reg v144, f375.  
Plan of Bransdale and Farndale, Tukes and Ayer,  
1826, ZEW M/49.  
Bransdale East Side, J Wright, 1849, ZEW M/65.  
Tithe apportionment (1847) and map (1848) of  
Farndale High Quarter and Bransdale East Side,  
NYCRO, T(PR/KMO).  
9 May 1814, PR/KRD 1/8.  
16 Apr 1824, *ibid*.  
18 Aug 1848, PR/KMO 1/18.  
Probate 5 Aug 1859, Probate Registry, York.  
National Valuations made by the Commissioners  
of the Inland Revenue, 1910, NYCRO, NG/V.  
Newspaper cutting pasted in the Moon family  
Bible in the possession of Jim, Kenneth and  
George Moon and their sister, Vera Pearson, in  
Sinnington today.

## Firebreak earthworks on the North York Moors

by Basil Wharton

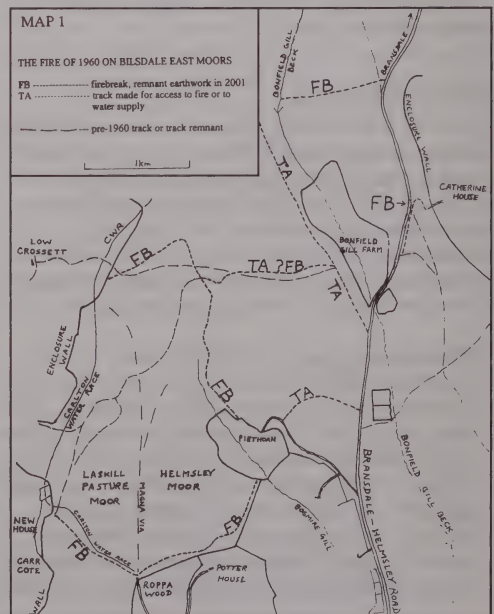
This report supplements the account in Ryedale Historian Number 18 (Wharton 1997) describing some of the landscape features produced by firefighting on Bilsdale East Moors in 1960. There is more information on the tactics used on this occasion to control a very extensive fire, and more detail to show where the firebreak on Laskill Pasture Moor had probably obliterated parts of older earthworks.

## THE MOORLAND FIRE OF 1960

This fire on Bilsdale East Moors affected over 2000 hectares of heather moorland (Reports in local press). In many places the fire burned deep into peat soils, destroying roots and seeds so that complete recovery of the vegetation took up to 20 years. It is believed to have started south of Crookstaff Hill (SE 597996), where routine burning of a plot in customary rotation had taken place some weeks earlier. In the ensuing dry weather it is possible that smouldering had continued in the peat. A severe northerly gale arose on the night of 25-26 June, reigniting the fire and driving it forward 7 km within 24 hours. Farms and forestry plantations were at risk; emergency measures included the use of ploughs by local farmers, also bulldozers brought by the Forestry Commission and other contractors to create strips of bare ground as firebreaks. Troops from Catterick Camp were drafted as an extra labour force.

The main defences were aligned on the flanks of the advancing fire, eventually to converge on a narrowing

front. A direct frontal approach was impossible. Defences on the east flank were based on the Helmsley to Bransdale road. New tracks were driven over the moor north and west of Bonfield Gill so that firetenders could reach remote areas. To approach the west flank vehicles climbed to the moor on a steep track near Low Crossett in Bilsdale. Water was then pumped from the Carlton Water Race where it contoured high on the upper slope of the valley, supplying fire crews who could be some hundreds of metres away.





Farmers ploughed strips parallel to the fire's west flank, while soldiers carried away the heavy turves leaving strips of ground bare of vegetation. As a second line of defence the Forestry Commission brought bulldozers to make a wide strip set further back from the fire. The farmers claimed that this was a belated move after they themselves had already stopped the fire's westward spread! The fire was confined on a narrowing front, but reached the enclosure wall next to the farm house at Piethorn; it was then held on the line of a newly made track from Piethorn to the Bransdale Road, using water from springs which fed the nearby Nawton Water Race, until rain came on 3 July.

Because of concern for new plantations along the moorland fringe at Helmsley East Moors and Roppa, the Forestry Commission had constructed a secondary firebreak south of Piethorn, parts of which are still conspicuous features on Laskill Pasture Moor and Helmsley Moor; another north of Bonfield Gill was intended to protect plantations in Bransdale. Similar firebreaks have been constructed by the Forestry Commission at many places around the moors when plantations are thought to be at risk; parts remain today as embankments, mounds, and tracks.

## THE LASKILL PASTURE MOOR - HELMSLEY MOOR FIREBREAK

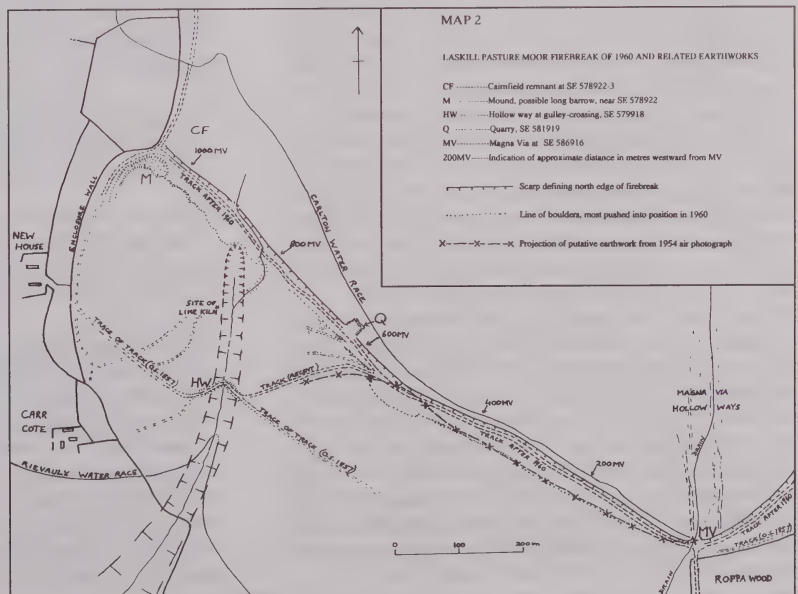
Laskill Pasture and Helmsley Moors form the southernmost expanse of the moorland which adjoins the east side of Bilsdale. They have a common boundary along the hollow ways of an ancient north-south road, the Magna Via of an early Rievaulx charter (Hayes 1988), and occupy a plateau with a predominant southward slope towards an encircling fringe of forestry plantations and farmland. Heather covers most of the area, on a shallow soil above thinly bedded soft sandstone. Surface boulders of weathered gritstone are widely scattered, in places grouped in 'blockfields'.

The secondary firebreak constructed by the Forestry Commission in 1960 extends for 2.5 km from the head wall of enclosed fields near the New House at SE 578922 to the enclosure wall of Piethorn at SE 598926. A track remaining on part of its

course is still in use, making redundant an older west-east route shown by the O.S. 1st edition 6" map of 1857, much of which is now invisible on the ground. Along the firebreak's 1 km western section, across Laskill Pasture Moor, a nearly continuous line of surface boulders lies 10-30 m south of the track, often accompanied by a break in slope, all generally supposed to be made up of soil and boulders displaced in forming the firebreak. As reported in Ryedale Historian, 18, there had been recent suggestions that earlier archaeological features had been in part overridden by the firebreak, and a pre-1960 air photograph seemed to show some evidence in support.

Many remains of prehistoric field systems are known on the North York Moors lying in the same altitude range as Laskill Pasture Moor (c.200-300m O.D) e.g. at Bumper Moor on Bilsdale west side only 3 km from the Laskill earthworks. The ruined houses on the western edge of Laskill Pasture (Carr Cote, New House) might be the latest in a long succession of settlements beginning in prehistoric times on the same or nearby sites, making use of the moor as pasture (v. Cowley 1992 on the continuity of settlement sites). The discovery in 1995 of clearance cairns and remnant field walls next to the Laskill firebreak prompted this further essay in relating air photographs of 1954 and 1972 to what appears on the ground today.

In 1960 the late John Grayson was an engineer with the Forestry Commission. He recalled having used bulldozers to construct firebreaks on many sites on the North York Moors; he had been responsible for those on Laskill Pasture Moor and elsewhere in the 1960s



(pers. comm. 1995). He described the operation in June 1960 which began outside the gate from the newly planted extension to Roppa Wood (SE 586916); here the hollow ways of the Magna Via had already been levelled in forming a west-east track, perhaps even before Joseph Foord dug his Carlton Water Race across them in 1759. This supply of water to Carlton had ceased only in the previous year (McLean, forthcoming). Mr Grayson was aware that he had obliterated a part of the channel where it crossed his track to enter Roppa Wood, but he did not recall any topographical feature influencing his course as he began working westward from the Magna Via across Laskill Pasture Moor. In the circumstances minor details of topography were often ignored and archaeological features could be damaged. On Laskill Pasture Moor surface boulders had to be pushed aside from a strip of ground up to 50m wide; heather and topsoil were then scraped off leaving a scarp on the upslope (north) side, and upcast soil was pushed towards the displaced boulders. The scrape was ended some 200m short of the New House enclosure wall; boulders there had already been pushed aside when news came that the fire was under control.

### **Archaeologists visit Laskill Pasture Moor**

In 1996 members of the Helmsley and Teesside Archaeological Societies held a joint field excursion on Laskill Pasture Moor, starting at the Roppa Wood gate (SE586916), where Mr Grayson had begun his work on the firebreak in 1960. The hollow ways of the Magna Via were noted leading uphill to the north; to the south they had been almost ploughed out in the extended Roppa Plantation; also noticed was the truncated end of a remaining section of the Carlton Water Race. After viewing the 1 km line of banks and boulders, many of those present considered that all could be explained simply as the upcast of 1960. The line of surface boulders was seen to end in a grass-covered mound next to the enclosure wall north of New House (M on Map 2); the mound was extant before 1960 and has been recorded as possibly a long barrow. From here the party made a detour of c.150m northward to look at another section of the Carlton Water Race, where it passes through an opening under the wall after crossing the topmost fields of New House. This detour resulted in the discovery of a hitherto unrecognized cairnfield with remnant walls, close to the firebreak track's western end, where heather had recently been burned and exposed the ground surface (cf on Map 2). It seemed likely that this part of the firebreak had cut across a field system extending further south beside the enclosure wall, where remnant hollow-ways and embankments lie among a scatter of boulders, and the wall itself has some large orthostats in its base. This area of possible field clearance merges into several hectares of the moorland fringe beside New

House and Carr Cote strewn with very large exposed blocks and slabs of weathered gritstone pitched at all angles. It was suggested that some large uprights had been deliberately placed, but then all agreed that along with an imagined stone circle nearby they were more probably the random result of erosion and mass movement of soil. The dense growth of bracken might indicate the less impoverished soil likely on a downslope area, perhaps recently woodland.

The societies' outing ended with a look at the ruined cruck house at Carr Cote, a nearby section of Foord's Rievaulx Water Race, and some coal workings of the 18th-19th centuries amid fringe woodlands on the slopes below Carr Cote.

### **Air Photographs and Sketch Maps**

Information from studies on the restoration of heather moorland carried out in the North York Moors National Park has helped to interpret air photographs of Laskill Pasture Moor taken some years before and after the events of 1960. Prints of photographs from an R.A.F. survey of 1954 are compared with those of a survey by Meridian in 1972 (Hereafter RAF54 and Me72). On these monochrome prints the moors appear as a mosaic of light and dark shaded areas with boundaries which are usually irregular in outline and often ill-defined. The darkest areas represent spreads of mature heather; young heather, grass, bracken, bilberry, and bare ground appear in various lighter shades. Much of this patchwork effect results from management by cyclical burning of selected plots in order to produce an overall spread of heather at different stages of growth.

Map 1 locates some of the access tracks and firebreak remains of 1960 which are still identifiable on the ground in 2001.

On Maps 2 and 3 a linear feature visible on RAF54 is projected together with the lines of firebreak earthworks shown on Me72.

In the text and on the maps, features along the course of the Laskill firebreak are located with reference to their approximate distance in metres from the Magna Via (MV) at SE 586916, shown thus: 200MV.

On RAF54 some areas of blotchy lighter shading represent recently burned heather with early regrowth. One of these on Laskill Pasture Moor has a remarkably straight edge forming a clear line of contrast with dark mature heather for over 400m, and initial comparison with Me72 showed its alignment to be close to that of the 1960 firebreak. Such a long regular margin to a plot selected for routine burning is unusual, and is likely to have been determined by a topographical feature. A degraded boundary wall or track remnant could have



served as a convenient plot marker without necessarily being conspicuous in the landscape (such a supposition is perhaps reinforced by the recent discovery of part of an ancient field system at the firebreak's western end). The eastern end of the putative earthwork can be accurately located where the Carlton Water Race intersects the line of the westernmost hollow way of the Magna Via, a site easy to recognise on both air photographs, and on the ground today (SE586916 MV on Map 2, the starting point for construction of the firebreak in 1960). Extending westward the line of contrast becomes less clear beyond 400MV, but continues as a pale streak through an area of irregular dappled patterns. Near 600MV it turns southward away from the future firebreak alignment, fading out on approaching the hollow way at SE 579918.

Me72 shows details of the firebreak in clear outline as they appeared 12 years after its construction, amid vegetation patterns mostly quite different from those on RAF54. Exposed subsoil appears stark white in a strip up to 30 m wide, evidently still without vegetation. The strip's northern edge is sharply defined by the bulldozer's cut; on its opposite side the bare ground merges into blotchy patterns representing upcast soil with some regrowth of vegetation. The extent of upcast displacement varies, its limit being outlined against an adjacent uniform spread of heather. Westward the wide strip of bare ground with contiguous upcast is seen to end near 850MV; the northern scarp extends a further 200m along with a newly cut track, reaching almost to the enclosure wall near New House. A line of boulders extends westward from 130MV alongside the firebreak, in places lying up to 20m away from the irregular margin of upcast soil. West of 500MV the boulder line begins to follow more closely the apparent edge of the spread of upcast, and near 600MV two offsets in the line mark a change in the firebreak's alignment. From the end of the completed scrape at 850MV, a very prominent line of large boulders straggles towards the enclosure wall some tens of metres distant from the newly cut scarp and track.

Me72 shows the form of the firebreak as it crosses Helmsley Moor to be broadly similar, but with no line of boulders outside the limit of upcast. In places a few boulders lie close to the upcast limit, some in irregular line exactly on its margin. The firebreak's course across the moor was presumably determined by the boundaries of plantations (which were new in 1960), and seems unrelated to anything visible on RAF54.

Projection on to Maps 2 and 3 shows the line of the putative earthwork from RAF54 in relation to the firebreak scarp and boulder line from Me72. Map 3 shows a section of the firebreak at larger scale, centred on 400MV, with outlines of bare ground and upcast

soil drawn from Me72. Projection on to the maps of the linear feature from RAF54 shows that whatever it represents lay on or close to the boulder line between 130MV and 400 MV, where both are outside the limit of upcast. Elsewhere displaced soil and boulders were evidently pushed across the line of the earlier feature, presumably removing any traces on the ground. Unfortunately the RAF film did not clearly resolve images of boulders, so if any were present along an earthwork extant in 1954 they do not appear on the print.

### **Laskill Pasture Moor in 2001**

The firebreak remains are now covered by well-established heather except for a track which remains in use, recently resurfaced with hardcore from a small quarry opened in 1996. The northern scarp is degrading but recognisable. The line of boulders visible on Me72 is still in place, often on or near a variable break in slope.

Relating the air photographs to present topography poses some questions. On Laskill Pasture Moor the break in slope present along much of the boulder line appears not to represent everywhere the actual limit to the spread of upcast soil; there is no comparable feature on Helmsley Moor, where present topography relates well to the firebreak features outlined on Me72. At Laskill the extent of upcast seems clear on Me72, but between 130MV and 500 MV its irregular margin is shown as up to 20m away from the boulder line, and appears unrelated to features on the ground. Was the layer of upcast actually more extensive in 1960 than it appeared in 1972? On ecological considerations it seems unlikely that native heather could have become well established on a layer of seriously disturbed soil in twelve years (see below). From 130MV to 400MV the 1954 putative earthwork appears to coincide with the boulder line, here well separated from the upcast; any boulders pushed into position there in 1960 must have been moved with very little ground disturbance. Some of those which are earthfast along a low bank here might be part of a structure represented on RAF54. Boulders lying free on the surface were more probably among those pushed into place in 1960,

There is a possibly significant contrast with the irregular line of large boulders west of 850MV, where the firebreak had been left unfinished. Although deliberate stripping of topsoil had not been started here in 1960, by 1972 regrowth of heather was still incomplete on much of the disturbed ground behind the line of displaced boulders. Part of an ancient field system adjoins the northern scarp nearby, and its probable extension across the line of the firebreak would be a source for the many boulders displaced here.

The line of the putative earthwork on RAF54 becomes less distinct and its projection on Map 2 more conjectural where it is shown curving away from the firebreak alignment near 600MV. Nevertheless its orientation is matched on the ground by some ditches and possible old track marks, and by a new track (or one recut on an older alignment?) leading beside a line of shooting butts to join the old route across the moor. It may therefore be a relic of a much older pattern of tracks and boundaries in the landscape. But the offset banks and boulder line near 600MV are surely 1960 firebreak constructions overriding the older features.

### A Suggested Interpretation

Data from experiments on restoring and conserving heather moorland after damage by fire or other disturbance (NYMP Moorland Management Programme 1985-1990; Gardner et al. 1993) appear relevant to what is seen on Me72. It has been found that the moderate heat produced in a customary regime of controlled burning favours seed dispersal and germination; seedlings survive well in lightly burned but undisturbed ground, and new shoots may grow from the base of incompletely burned stems. Ground cover is likely to be re-established within 5 years, hence the mature heather present in 1972 on some areas which in 1954 appeared as if recently burned.

After extensive mechanical disturbance of the soil much more time is needed for heather to become re-established. On the wide strips of exposed mineral subsoil evident on Me72 regrowth would be dependent on seed dispersal from the margins. Heather seedlings do not survive well on soil displaced and then left uncompacted; the growth of survivors would be slow in raw subsoil lacking in humus, and they would be vulnerable to uprooting by sheep and grouse. The very low soil fertility on much of Laskill Pasture Moor may be inferred from the monoculture of heather, and from

the shallow layer of organic soil revealed by sections in the quarry near 600MV and in several recently deepened erosion gulleys.

In uncompacted bulldozed upcast a few scattered plants might revive to produce clumps of new growth, but new shoots would be vulnerable to selective grazing along with any surviving seedlings, resulting in some of the patchy recovery visible on Me72. Nearly everywhere on Me72 the edge of upcast soil is well defined, and new marginal growth could have had little effect on its apparent position in twelve years. Me72 therefore closely represents the true extent of upcast spread in 1960; where an even cover of mature heather up to 20m wide is seen separating the upcast margin from the boulder line, it is most unlikely that it could have become established after only twelve years.

### Conclusion

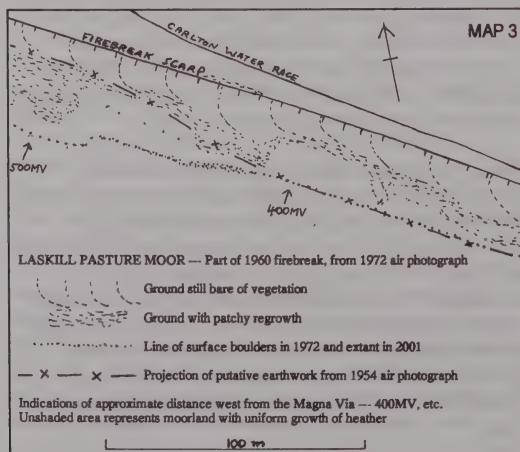
Air photography appears to support a supposition that a linear earthwork on the eastern side of Laskill Pasture Moor was partly overridden by upcast during construction of a firebreak in 1960. It is suggested that a section nearly 300m long was not obliterated, but boulders cleared from the intended path of the firebreak were pushed into line against it. Some earthfast boulders might be part of the earlier structure, perhaps a boundary or trackway. On the moor's western fringe, boulders were removed from an area which probably formed part of an adjoining prehistoric field system. Perhaps at some time an opportunity will arise for using geophysical survey to confirm or refute these inferences from simple observations.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to William Ainsley, one of the farmers who played a leading part in fighting the moorland fire in 1960, for another first-hand account of the tactics used on that occasion. I am obliged to Rona Charles, Ecological Adviser to the North York Moors National Park, for information from the Park's experiments on heather conservation, and to Graham Lee, Archaeological Conservation Officer at the National Park, for much helpful advice.

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#### Appendix 1.

Laskill Pasture Moor geology, typified in the quarry section at SE 581919.  
Grey sandy soil with heather roots - 20-30cm.  
Brown silty sand with angular gravel - 30cm.  
Sandstone, thinly bedded and fragile, down to quarry floor at 3m.

The depth of subsoil above bedrock seen in new erosion gulleys varies widely, in places >2m. Surface boulders found being undercut in gully sections are usually based less than 50cm below ground level. The topsoil is everywhere thin, and personal observation has shown that some burned areas remain bare or moss-covered for a few years before heather seedlings appear.

### FIREBREAKS NORTH OF PIETHORNE AND BONFIELD GILL

1. Low Crosset enclosure wall at SE 582943 to Piethorn enclosure wall at 596932.  
This secondary firebreak was constructed by John Grayson along the fire's west flank, beginning where an old track ascending from Bilsdale reaches the moor. Part of it remains in use as a track for vehicles in 1999; for over 1km north from Piethorn it was until recently much obscured by dense growth of heather or bracken, but identifiable as a nearly continuous linear bank. A new quarry for hardcore has been opened next to its course near SE 593936.

2. Surroundings of Bonfield Gill Farm.  
The late Arnold Leng was the tenant of Bonfield Gill Farm in 1960, and confirmed that some extant

earthworks in the vicinity were remnants of 1960 firebreaks (pers comm 1996). The farm is entirely surrounded by moorland; in 1960 fire reached the enclosure walls, and came close to the house. Parts of a substantial secondary firebreak remain along the east side of the road to Bransdale, beginning by the enclosure wall at SE 615952 above Catherine House. A wide berm and spoil bank curve up towards the road, a line of banks then extend southward for c.500m parallel to the road. At first these are continuous, then break up into separate mounds often visible as "islands" of bilberry in a "sea" of heather, ending at SE 611947. Material may have been taken away as hardcore or infill from this section and its extension further south towards the farm enclosure wall.

Remains of a track and spoil banks go west for 1km from the Bransdale road at SE 09964, to end abruptly on the east bank of the Bonfield Gill Beck. The alignment is that of a track shown on the 1857 OS as continuing westward beyond the beck to reach Apple Tree Hurt Farm in Bilsdale. The old track here was renewed both for access to the beck for water and to form a firebreak.

A new track was driven north for 2km from the Helmsley to Bransdale Road at SE 608939 to give access and then form firebreaks along the old east-west route between Bonfield Gill and Low Crossett. Firebreaks proved useless here across the front of the advancing fire as blazing embers were carried great distances in the gale. Little evidence of any can now be seen, but the new tracks are still maintained in use.

3. Piethorn at SE 598930 to the Helmsley-Bransdale road at SE 607932.

The 1km long road over Brown Hill provided access to the fire near the southern limit of its advance. The fire is said to have reached Piethorn within the first 12 hours, but was confined to a narrow front by the flanking operations to the north. Around Piethorn it was then controlled with the help of a copious supply of water from the spring feeding the Nawton Water Race.

Rain on 2 July ended the smouldering which had continued in a few areas, but on 5 July the *Yorkshire Post* reported that a change in the wind was fanning the northern section into a "raging blaze" again, with renewed risk to areas so far unaffected.

The *Gazette* and *Herald* of 15 July reported comment which alleged that authority had failed to respond quickly and sanction the use of troops to aid the fire services in dealing with a most exceptional fire, whose economic consequences were not widely appreciated.

## The Shepherds' Farm at Great Edstone

By Lorne Wilkinson

*This description was written by the late Lorne Wilkinson and is published by kind permission of Mrs Wilkinson.*

After reading 'The Shepherd Family of Appleton le Moors' by Shirley Brooke, (*Ryedale Historian* No 19), I was prompted to record my connection with the family.

I farmed Shepherds' farm at Great Edstone from 1956 to 1973. My father negotiated the price of the farm in 1952 with Mr Shepherd, a bachelor living with his sister at Sleights near Whitby. The farm buildings were the finest range of mid nineteenth century building in the area, built by the Shepherds about 1868 in a paddock which abutted on the village street.

A map of the area dated 1858 clearly shows the paddock with an old range of buildings behind the dwelling on the opposite side of the village street; except for the well there was no sign of this old range when I took over the farm.

The Shepherds spared no expense in the construction of their buildings. They were built of limestone blocks of a standard thickness brought from the Quarry near Halfway House on the Hutton le Hole road, so I was told by an elderly villager who said his father helped cart the stone down. The entire range was built with coursed limestone with substantial sandstone lintels over all doorways. The interior walls of the building were plastered to the roof making it impossible for rats or mice to find a safe wall haven. Every roof was covered with Welsh blue slates. The rainwater gathering for these roofs appeared to be taking the water uphill; at least it ran away from the village street which was lower than the paddock. It was some time before I discovered the reason for this unusual transfer of water; it was to save underground water piping. The water from the roofs was piped into two large underground tanks built of brick with dome shaped roofs each having a two foot square opening covered with a stone flag. These tanks had been built to store water for the stationary Steam Engine which was fixed to drive numerous items of what, at that time, was the most modern barn machinery.

The Steam Engine was housed in the south eastern building of the range with a sixty foot brick chimney that was a landmark for more than a century. An overhanging roof protruded out from the side of the Engine house to be used as a store for wood for the

Engine. A row of bracing slots for that roof can still be seen across the window lintels of the Engine house. The Engine powered shafting for machinery at both ground level and first floor level. The shafting serving ground floor machinery drove the grinding mill which comprised two large circular stones; the bottom one was stationary while the other rotated to grind the grain to powder. Through the next wall was the oat roller for flattening the grains to make the feed more digestible for the horses. Yet another pulley on that shafting drove the stationary threshing machine. The large heavy drum of beaters was still *in situ* when I took over the farm but, unfortunately, one night it fell on a heifer and killed her, removing the last item of machinery after ninety years' existence.

The shafting for items on the first floor was fastened to the roof beams; this powered the hoist which lifted the sacks of grain weighing 16 stones up from the threshing machine, up through a trap door on the first floor to be fed into the mill or the oat roller. Also on the first floor was the straw chopper. Into this whole sheaves of oats were fed steadily to be chopped into one inch lengths for feeding a less nutritious bulk feed for horses during their less strenuous periods. A chop house was built below this machine to accommodate the bulky material. That first floor was a large chamber that could accommodate sheaves for several hours threshing. Access was gained by a flight of broad stone steps turning 180 degrees with two broad doorways through which sheaves could be forked at either end; one end for the chopper, the other for the thresher. Under the same roof the building extended to a large barn into which the straw fell after discharge from the Thresher. The Engine house and the shell of this large building is all that is left of that wonderful range of buildings that had been planned with considerable forethought. The large straw barn had a doorway direct into the folding yard so that the carrying of bulky loose straw was kept to a minimum as it was most needed in that yard for feeding the cattle and to provide litter for making manure for the land. The buildings were set out in two wings stretching back from the engine house to the village street.

Next to the "chop house" on the eastern wing of the building was the "turnip house" A wide slide door gave access from outside for carts loaded with roots to reverse in and tip. The roots, (turnip, swedes, or mangold) were then loaded into a hopper beneath which was a hand driven drum with rightangled blades; these cut the roots into banana shaped slivers about an inch square. These fell into skips under the machine; as each one filled it was placed on a railway bogey to be transported down the feed passage to give to the waiting cows. Chaff from the threshing machine was often mixed with these chopped roots to



aid digestion. This railway served a calving box and a long cowshed for 20 cows chained up side by side. Between this cowshed and the village street was a two story building; the upper floor was the granary approached by a flight of stone steps. In the nineteen sixties this granary was used for village festivities during summer, there were concerts and united services held to the delight of most villagers. Under the granary was a series of open archways where the carts and carriages were stored. Across from the farm entrance but still abutting to the village street was the blacksmith's shop with bellow, anvil etc. This is still in existence.

The western wing comprised a stable for three riding or carriage horses with a hay loft above. Next to that

was a stable for eight work horses, then two foaling boxes. Across this yard from the stable was a slate roofed leanto; this had a pillared open front to facilitate the storage of hay and straw as needed for the horses. The area beyond the foaling boxes was walled off as the cattle section with two boxes for smaller cattle, with the covered area of the foldyard stretching back to the Straw Barn.

In all a commodious and well planned farmstead. The effluent from the cows and horses ran into an underground system which was regularly flushed out by the outlets in the underground tanks, when these were overfilled. It was tragic to see this masterminded complex dismantled to make way for a featureless modern grainstore.

## Excavations In Ryedale 2000

By P. A. Rahtz and Lorna Watts

### Blansby Park Roman Villa, Pickering And St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale

#### Preface

Three small excavations took place in 2000 under the auspices of the Helmsley Archaeological and Historical Society. Two, at Kirkdale, were done in January-February and July in advance of new drainage schemes. That at Blansby Park was an evaluation of the recently-discovered Roman villa, in late May-early June. For the latter, we are indebted for financial support from the archaeology section of the North York Moors National Park (in which the villa is situated), the Ryedale District Council, the Department of Archaeology of the University of York, CBA Yorkshire, and the Roman section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. The Duchy of Lancaster kindly gave us a licence to excavate.

#### BLANSBY PARK

##### Introduction

For several decades, Richard and Edward Harrison have made a large collection of finds from ploughsoil in the area they farm in the Park. The discoveries represent a wide spectrum of settlement and industry from Neolithic times down to recent centuries. In the SW part of the Park, in the Park Gate area (fig 1) the Harrisons recovered much Roman building material, and other finds. Graham Lee (National Park) commissioned a geophysical survey, which

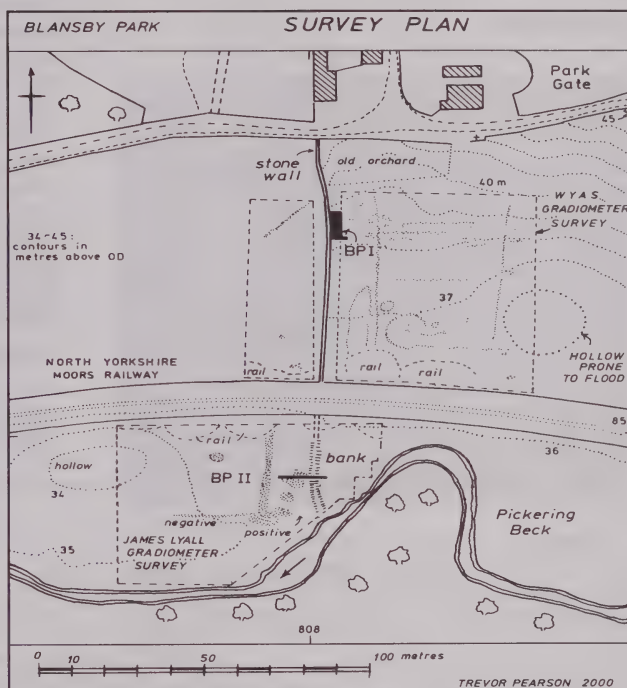


Fig 1. Survey plan, Park Gate

defined linear anomalies and a circular building. This was in the field north of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Then, in Autumn 1999, in the pasture field south of the railway, by the Pickering Beck, moles turned up over a hundred tesserae.

The evaluation aimed at defining the stratification of the site, and especially the relationship of the Roman structures to the alluvial and colluvial deposits of the Beck and the slopes; and to the west boundary of the Park, which extends through the area. It was hoped to find evidence of the dating of the villa and the range

of its material culture.

The work was done by local volunteers in very wet weather; we are especially grateful for the help given by a team from the Scarborough Archaeological Society led by Chris Hall and Trevor Pearson. The work was directed by Lorna Watts and Philip Rahtz, with Andrew (Bone) Jones, who was in charge of the scientific programme.

### Cutting BPI

This was in the NW part of the main ploughed field, on the east side of the boundary wall. The latter was of several phases, of medieval and later date. Below its foundations was a Roman occupation stratum, with a coin of Valentinian I (365-75), and Late Roman pottery. The complex stratification here is shown in fig 2. The villa complex clearly extends in the field to the west.

### Cutting BPII

The site here is on the western side of the Park boundary, here a destroyed wall now turfed over. A cutting 15m wide was cut through the boundary and the area to the west, where the moles had their little digs.

The bad weather prevented a full excavation, but it was possible to determine the relationship of the Roman strata to a complex series of alluvial deposits and flooding episodes, below the Park boundary (fig 3).

In the main part of the cutting, there was (as anticipated), dense building material, from a structure extending some 4-5 m west-east internally, one unit or room of a larger complex. Towards the Park boundary the lower part of a wall foundation was defined, which proved to be the east wall of a

hypocausted area. A square metre of this was emptied to its burnt sub-floor. In this fill, and in the general destruction layer, were many structural finds. The mole-count of tesserae (121) was increased to 760, of several sizes and colours, indicating the former existence of mosaic floors (figs 4-5). There were pieces of flue-tile, and of tufa, which had been used for the vaulted roofing. There was many fragments of wall-plaster, mostly plain reddish from interior and exterior surfaces, and some with several colours indicating complex wall-decoration.

The proximity of the structure to the Beck suggests that it was the bath-house of a high-status establishment.

### Finds

The material recovered by the Harrisons from the main field included parts of several millstones (including fig 6) and querns, pottery, several late Roman coins, and two fragments of a small statue; though rather amorphous, one piece exhibits some drapery and fine decoration probably depicting textile (fig 7). Dr. John Senior, of Durham, thin-sectioned the stone, which is surprisingly not British, but Italian, a volcanic rock from the west side of the Apennines.

Small finds from the 2000 excavations were few. Those from BPI have been noted, but (apart from the building material) BPII yielded only a 2nd century brooch (fig 8), though we believe the bath-house is late Roman.

### Scientific research

Using a variety of recovery techniques, some biological material was recovered of a size smaller than that would be found in hand excavation: mollusc

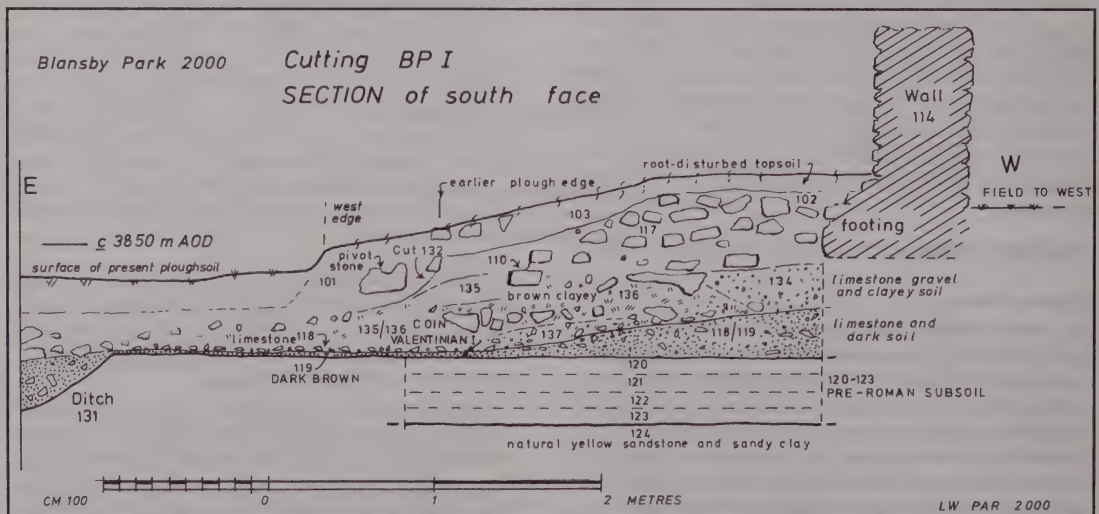


Fig 2. Cutting BPI, section of south face



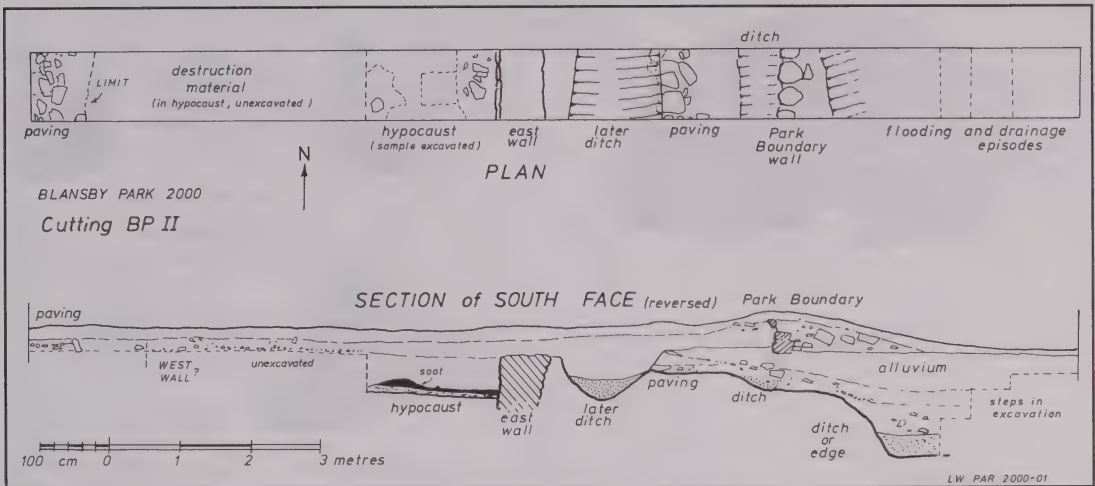


Fig 3. Cutting BP II, plan, and section of south face

shells, amphibians, large and small mammals and some birds; but no fish. Plant remains consist of charred grain, chaff and charcoal. Soils, both natural and anthropogenically modified, were examined and compared; there were many indications of gleying in these dale bottom contexts. To make comparisons between Roman and present environments, a survey was made by Jo Brehaut in the immediate area and further afield. Invertebrates were identified using pit fall traps and hand-catching; and a survey of vertebrates was made, resulting in the defining of many species.

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The evaluation paved the way to further work on the site, which needs greater resources and expertise than those currently available to us. There remains the








Fig 5. Tesserae

cataloguing and mapping of the large find collection in the Harrisons' farm. Richard is constructing a 'finds centre' where the material can be set out and studied.

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The Blansby Park villa is one of three known in Ryedale (fig 9); the only one that has been extensively excavated is Beadlam (see Ryedale Historian 19, 24-6); that at Hovingham is known only from 18th century accounts of its mosaics. There is probably another at East Ness, where a sarcophagus was found in the 17th century, inscribed with the names of four of the Vindiciani family. There is also Roman material, possibly associated with a villa, at Kirkdale (below).

In Ryedale, we have as yet no evidence, either historical or archaeological, to link these late Roman villas to Anglo-Saxon settlements of later centuries. The first record after the fourth century is Bede's

BLANSBY PARK 2000				
	25 mm	YELLOW-BROWN SANDSTONE	27	27
	20 mm	YELLOW-BROWN SANDSTONE	168	
		GREY LIMESTONE	7	
		RED CERAMIC	12	
		WHITE CHALK	73	
			260	260
	15 mm	YELLOW-BROWN SANDSTONE	8	
		BLACK MUDSTONE	17	
		BROWN MUDSTONE	8	
		GREY LIMESTONE	19	
		RED CERAMIC	37	
		WHITE CHALK	101	101
	10 mm	BLACK MUDSTONE	66	
		BROWN MUDSTONE	20	
		GREY LIMESTONE	7	
		RED CERAMIC	182	
		WHITE CHALK	311	311
	7 mm	WHITE CHALK	61	
			61	61
		total	760	760

Tesserae from BP II

Fig 4. Tesserae



Blansby Park 2000  
BP I 101

MILLSTONE, UPPER STONE  
UNDERSIDE

cm 10 20 0 10 20



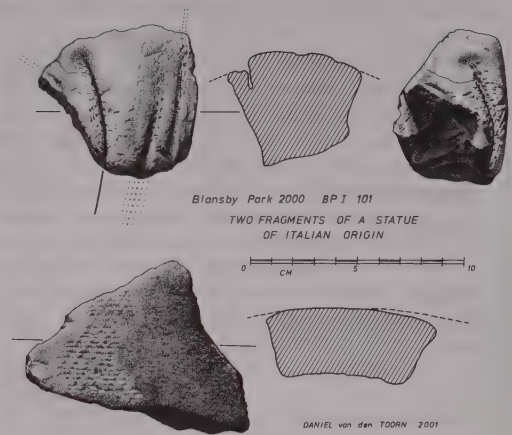
reconstruction  
of groove cutting pattern

DANIEL van den TOORN 2001

Fig 6. Millstone

account of the foundation of the Lastingham monastery in 680. One question we may ask is to whether there was any survival of any Roman-style Christianity in Ryedale. Villa owners in the area may have been Christianised, either by ideological belief, or by political expediency, in an area so near the site of the elevation of Constantine the Great to the purple in York, the emperor who adopted Christianity as the State religion. The only known object with possible Christian associations is a 'nail-cleaner' from Beadlam in the form of a fish.

The most likely places where we may glean any understanding of Ryedale in the 5th-7th centuries is probably not on villa sites, where Roman styles and standards are abandoned in the earlier 5th century at the latest. Nevertheless if there had been elements of Christianity surviving in the area, they (and other evidence for settlement) may be more likely to come



Blansby Park 2000 BP I 101

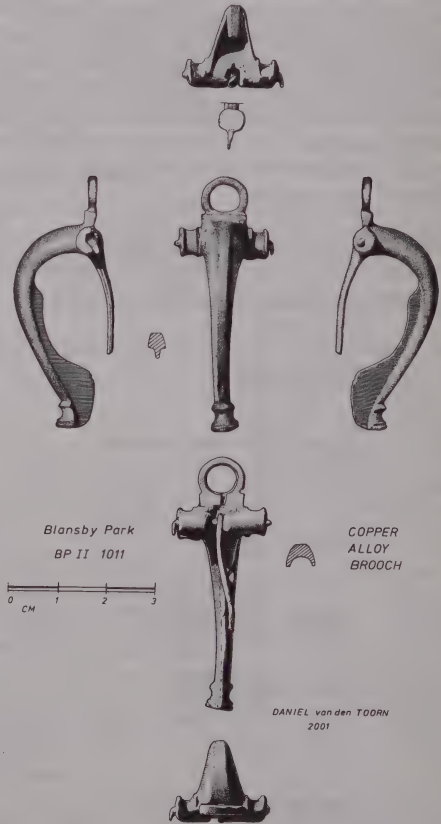
TWO FRAGMENTS OF A STATUE  
OF ITALIAN ORIGIN

0 CM 5 10

DANIEL van den TOORN 2001

Fig 7. Statue Fragments

from the many monastic sites, which may have had their origins in late Roman times; this brings us to the only one which has some exploration archaeologically, that of Kirkdale.



Blansby Park  
BP II 1011

COPPER  
ALLOY  
BROOCH

0 CM 1 2 3

DANIEL van den TOORN  
2001

Fig 8. Copper alloy brooch.



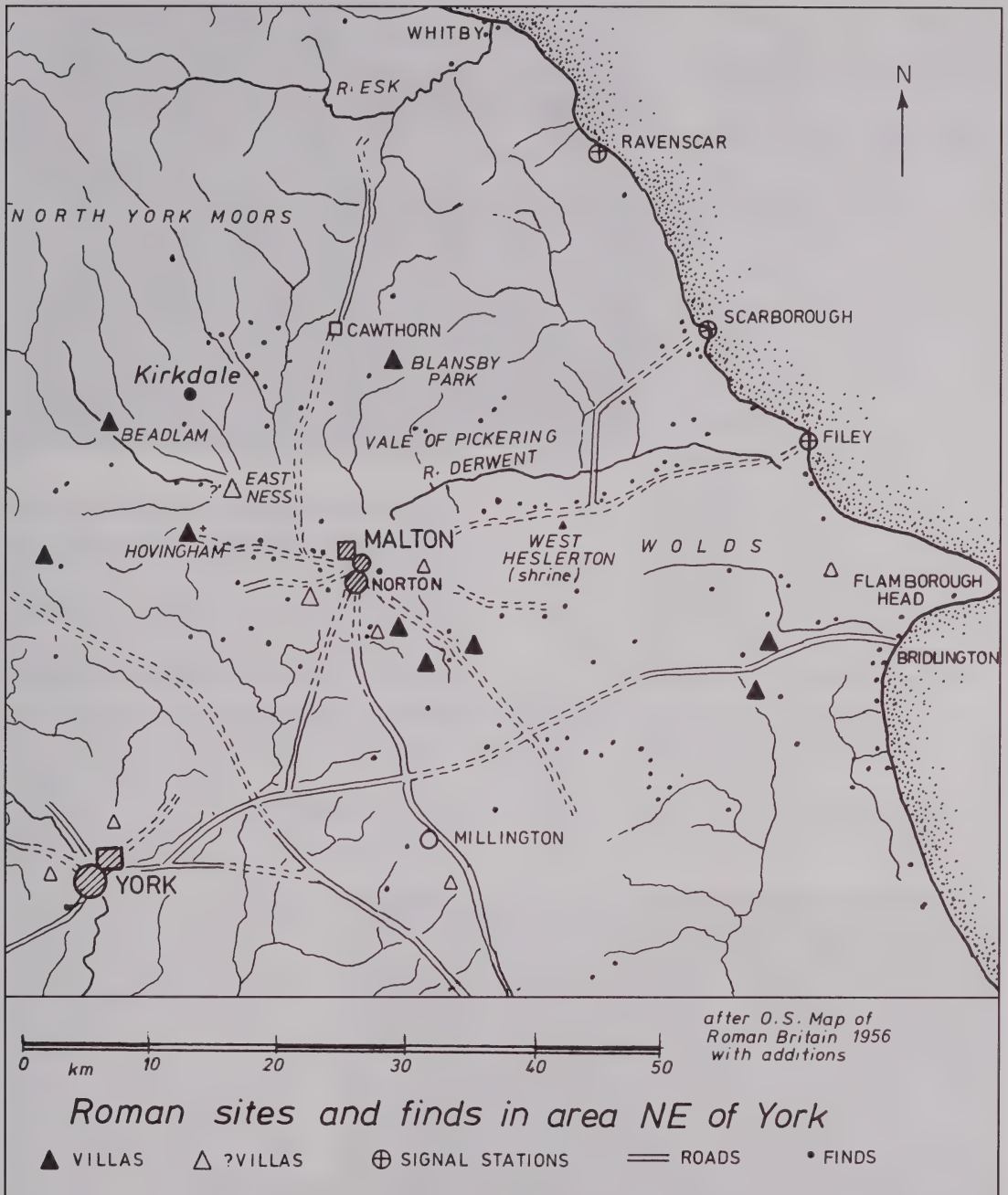


Fig. 9. Roman sites and finds in area NE of York

## St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale

The background to Kirkdale and the excavations in 1994-1998, have been described in Supplements to the Historian (refs AAK, KA). With reference to the discussion above, we may recall that in the excavations at the west end of the church, we defined a series of graves, dug in several phases. Close to the earliest graves was found a coin of Constantine the Great and half a melon bead. While these were not directly in a grave, there remains the possibility that burial here began in late Roman times, and continued through subsequent centuries until the 19th century. We cannot be sure about the dates of the burial sequence until we have radio-carbon determinations. There is, however, further evidence of Roman occupation on the site, including pottery and a little building material. Also at the west end excavations, we exposed a two-step foundation below the present west wall of the nave. Most of this was of unweathered cream limestone, though some of the lower step north of the 1827 tower was of re-used worn sandstone (ST, see AAK, 16-17). This work is still attributed to the



Fig 10. Foundations of sandstone at east end of nave

rebuild or restoration of St Gregory's in 1055-65, as recorded in the sundial inscription (for a new transcription of this, see Okasha in Watts et al, 1997, 65-92).

In 1999, the church architect, Peter Pace, decided that French drains (trenches filled with gravel) were needed to deal with damp problems. We agreed to dig the narrow trenches for this. The process began with

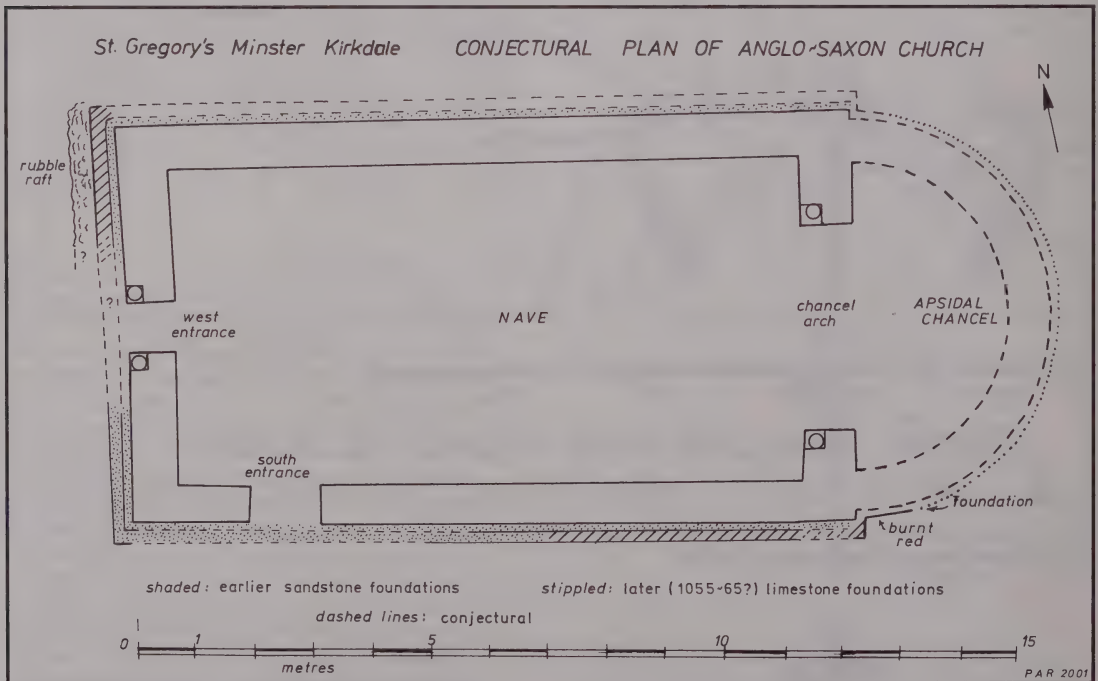


Fig 11. Nave/chancel junction, interpretation



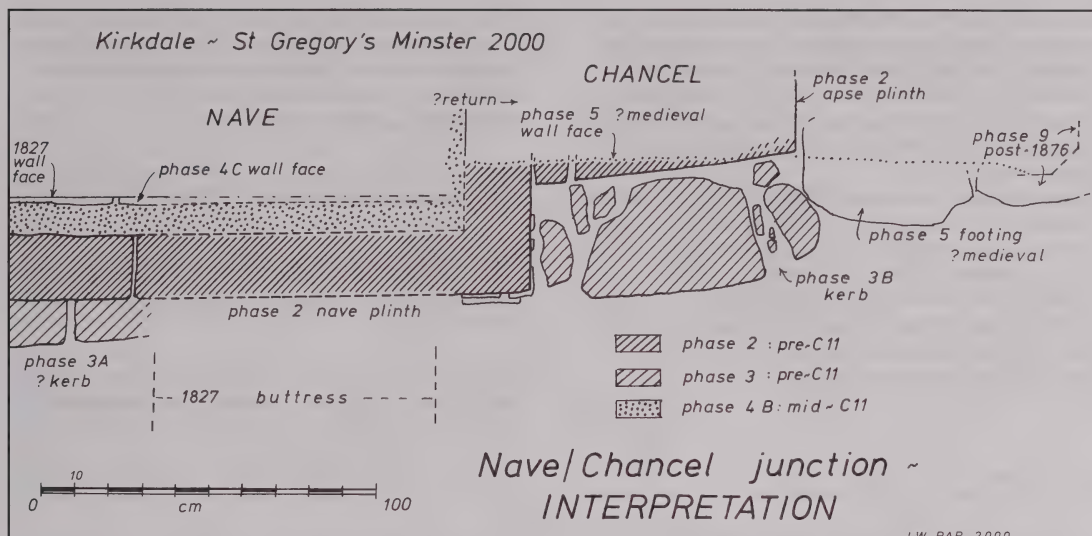


Fig 12. Conjectural plan of Anglo-Saxon church

the south side of the nave from the east side of the porch to and beyond the 1827 buttress.

It was anticipated that the two-step foundation that we had exposed at the west end would continue below the present nave wall. For a few metres east of this porch this was indeed the case; but further east, only the upper step was of the cream limestone attributed to the mid 11th century. The lower step was however of sandstone: several long roughly dressed blocks. Archaeological visitors were of the view that the tooling was Roman (fig 10).

Beyond the buttress to the east, the two-step foundation continued in the same form ending as the east end of the nave, and then turned in to the north to become the south side of an apsidal chancel (figs 11-12). Here the upper limestone step foundation was largely destroyed by medieval rebuilding of the chancel, but the lower sandstone angle of the nave and chancel was well-preserved. The sandstone blocks of the junction were burnt bright red on their surfaces and edges (fig 13). It was clear that this could have happened only when the ground level was some 30 cm below that of the mid-11th century (as it is today); and that this sandstone foundation was of an earlier church, possibly that described as ruinous in the sundial inscription. Evidently the superstructure or boarding or roof of this earlier church had been burnt in a considerable fire.

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The sandstone blocks used as a foundation for these elements of this earlier church (?9th – earlier 11th century) were presumably not originally cut for this purpose, but were re-used. If they were indeed of Roman origin, what structure had they been part of? In assuming they had not been brought from elsewhere, what structure was at Kirkdale?

They are not characteristic of villa-type structures like Blansby Park and Beadlam, which used smaller stones. One possibility is that they were part of a structure on the same spot as St Gregory's Minster, such as a substantial mausoleum, church or temple:



Fig 13. Junction of nave and apsidal chancel

something with some ideological significance. These would provide some explanation for the siting of St Gregory's, and help in the problem of continuity between the 4th century and a late 7th or 8th century Minster; but here we may be straying into a world of fantasy, in spite of our coin of Constantine and possible burials.

Another possibility is that the blocks were from some substantial secular structure; one possibility is the abutment of a bridge to cross the Hodge Beck on the (then) main route along the north edge of the Vale of Pickering. If there had been such a bridge, in Roman or Anglo-Saxon times, it would be where the present ford is: a place where the beck narrows in a steep defile, highly unsuitable for a ford.!

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While these ideas are speculative and dependent on a more confident identification of the blocks as Roman, they provide some framework for future discoveries, to link our Ryedale villas and our early monasteries, through the dark age of Ryedale.

AAK:L. Watts, J. Grenville and P. Rahtz, Archaeology at Kirkdale, Supplement to *The Ryedale Historian* No. 18 (1996-1997).

KA:P. Rahtz and L. Watts, Kirkdale Archaeology 1996-1997, Supplement to *The Ryedale Historian* No. 19 (1998-1999).

Watts et al. 1997 L. Watts, P. Rahtz, E. Okasha, S.A.J. Bradley and J. Higgitt, 'Kirkdale – the Inscriptions', *Medieval Archaeology* 41 (1997), 51-99 and pls I-III

## A Survey Of Hood Hill Castle

By Ed Dennison

### Introduction

In 1970, Whitaker published an article about Hood Castle in a previous volume of *The Ryedale Historian* (Whitaker 1970). His concluding paragraph hoped that further work would take place, and in April 2000 a detailed earthwork survey of the site was undertaken by Ed Dennison Archaeological Services, with funding provided by the North York Moors National Park Authority and English Heritage. The following paper is a summary of the archive survey report which is lodged with the North York Moors National Park Sites and Monuments Record (Dennison 2000).

### Background Information

Whitaker reviewed the available documentary sources for the castle, and suggested that it had originally been built by Robert de Stuteville (1086-1106), who was lord of the manor of Kilburn at this time. By the end of the 12th century the manor had passed to the Daiville (or D'Eyvil) family, and in 1264 John Daiville was given a licence "to enclose a place of his called Hood [co. York] with a dyke and a wall of stone and lime and to crenellate it and to hold it so fortified and crenellated for ever" (Cal. Patent Rolls Henry III 1258-66, p342). The wording of the licence implies that the castle had already fallen into disrepair, and Whitaker suggests that Daiville was undertaking rebuilding works, possibly replacing a traditional timber motte and bailey castle with a stone structure;

an extract from the Close Rolls for 1218 notes that the castle was partly in ruins and partly extant. The last documentary reference for the castle so far discovered occurs in 1322, when Isabella, the late wife of John de Vescy, held the castle and manor (Cal. Patent Rolls Edward II 1321-24, p204).

Other than this information provided by Whitaker, relatively little is known about the castle site. It is not, for example, mentioned in the *Victoria County History* discussion of earthwork castles (Armitage and Montgomerie 1912) or in local topographical or historical accounts (eg. Grainge 1859). However, Whellan (1859, 677) notes that the perpendicular rock of Hood Hill has "the appearance of an irregularly built castle" and I'Anson mentions the site in a more detailed study of North Riding castles (I'Anson 1913, 356). Several authors also note that the site was a home for outlaws, praying on pilgrims and other travellers passing between the nearby wealthy abbeys of Rievaulx and Byland (Wilkinson 1889, 306; Wright 1968, 1003).

### Earthwork Description (see figure 1)

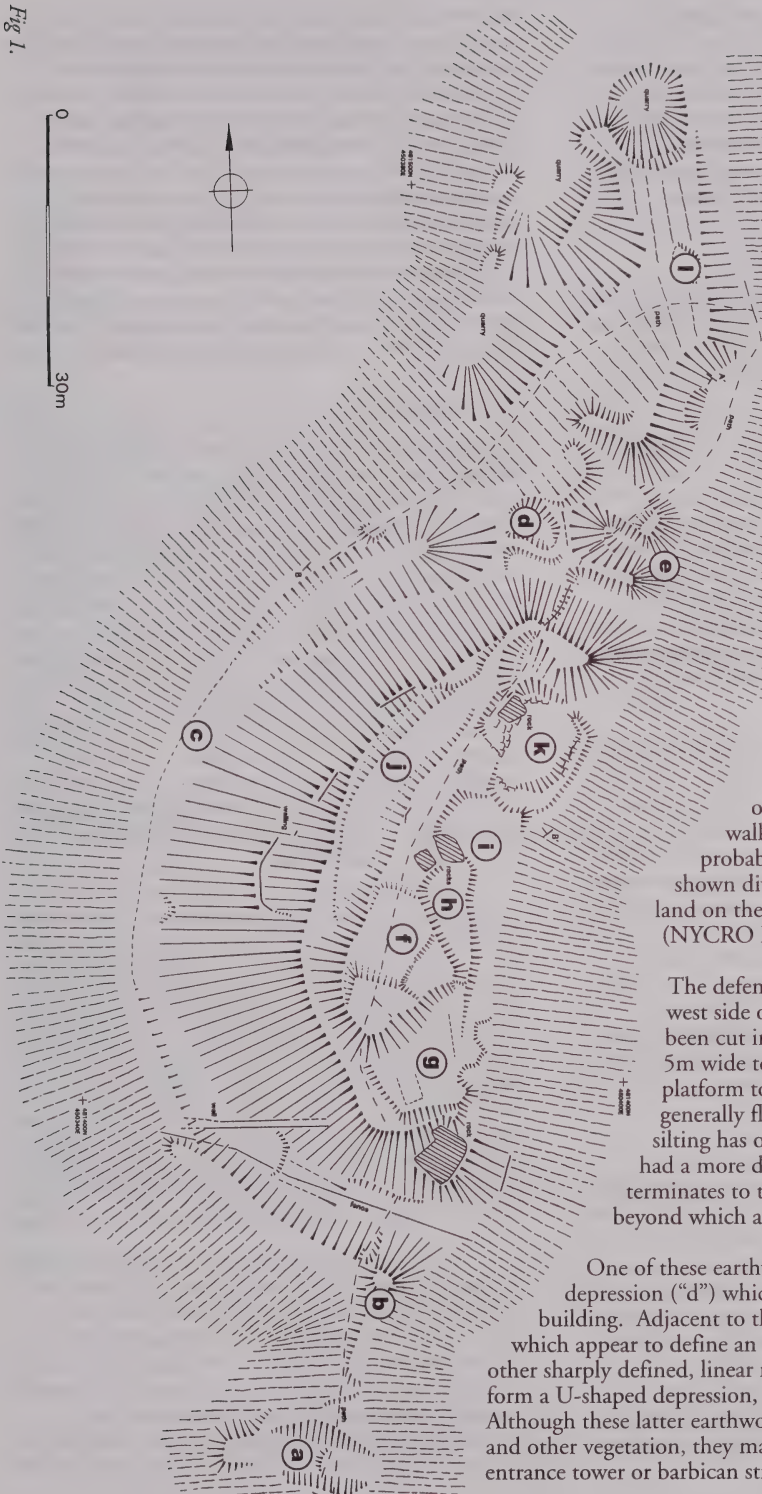
The castle occupies a commanding position on the highest part of a prominent north-south ridge, about 800m west of the main range of the Hambleton Hills, at a height of c.250m AOD. The ground on the east and west sides of the ridge drops steeply away, that on the east being almost precipitous in places. However, access is possible along the ridge from either end.

### The outer defences

The southern end of the castle complex is marked by a deep defensive rock-cut ditch ("a" on figure 1)



Fig 1.



which forms an effective boundary across the ridge. The ditch itself is U-shaped, c.7m wide and c.3m deep, and the ground is higher to the north than to the south.

To the north of the ditch, above the present footpath, is a narrow rectangular platform which terminates at the north end in a 2m wide sub-square platform ("b"). This commands a prominent view along the path to the south and, although apparently too small to accommodate a permanent structure, it may represent a look-out position.

Immediately to the north of here is another U-shaped rock-cut ditch. This is more substantial than that seen to the south, being up to 4m deep and c.5m wide at the base. An overgrown and collapsed drystone wall runs across the ditch; this wall is probably 19th century in date, as it is shown dividing two newly created blocks of land on the 1829 Kilburn enclosure plan (NYCRO MIC 1539/382).

The defensive ditch ("c") sweeps around the west side of the site in a wide arc. It has been cut into the natural slope to form a 4-5m wide terrace, with the much higher castle platform to the east. The terrace is now generally flat, but it is probable that some silting has occurred, and it may originally have had a more defensive appearance. The ditch terminates to the north-east in a sloping bank, beyond which are further earthworks.

One of these earthworks is a shallow sub-rectangular depression ("d") which may represent the site of a building. Adjacent to this are two right-angled banks which appear to define an entrance while to the east are two other sharply defined, linear mounds ("e") which combine to form a U-shaped depression, which is open at the east end. Although these latter earthworks are partly disturbed by trees and other vegetation, they may represent the remains of an entrance tower or barbican structure, placed across the main

route into the castle complex from the north.

There are no defences on the east side of the ridge, where there is a very steep natural slope running down to a narrow valley. The slope is such that no defences are ever likely to have been required, although it is always possible that some features might have slipped or slumped into the valley below.

### **Main area of occupation**

To the south of the possible barbican feature ("e"), the top of the ridge has been artificially levelled into a series of enclosures and platforms to create an area measuring c.55m north-south by c.20m east-west overall.

The highest enclosure ("f") lies towards the southern end of the area. Overall, this enclosure measures 15m north-south by 13m east-west, and it has a rectangular shape with a triangular extension to the east. Several smaller platforms can be seen within it, defined by low banks. The most prominent platform lies at the south end, while that to the north has an apparent entrance in the centre of the east side. This whole enclosure probably represents a motte but it is difficult to associate the earthworks with specific structures (see below).

There are several other platforms or enclosures, all at a slightly lower level, surrounding the motte. That to the south ("g") appears to be a small, sub-circular bailey containing a very slight, square-ended, rectangular depression and other banks which might represent the position of former buildings. Another platform ("h") lies to the north. Boulders, dead trees and scrub vegetation obscure some of the detail at the north end of this platform, but there seems to be another enclosure ("i") attached to the north-east. A fourth long and narrow enclosure ("j") lies to the north-west, between the ridge-top path and the steep scarp to the west. All these enclosures are likely to represent platforms within which former buildings were located.

The final area of interest lies in the north-east quadrant of the site. A flat-bottomed, sub-rectangular rock-cut depression ("k"), 10m long by 6m wide, has the appearance of a quarry, with boulders and the natural rock face defining the west and south sides. However, a curving bank on the east side and a definite gap at the north end might suggest a dam or sluice arrangement. This feature may have originated as a sandstone quarry, but it could have been modified at a later date to form a water-collecting tank which relied on natural rainfall for its supply. An alternative use might have been an enclosure for stock.

As noted above, the mid 13th century licence to crenellate refers to "a wall of stone and lime", and it is presumed that the castle had an outer defensive curtain wall. This appears to have run around the top of the steep slope on either side of the ridge, and along the very prominent bank forming the north side of the castle compound. This latter area contains a lot of tumbled stone, both on the surface and exposed by the footpath, and there are sections of rapidly eroding low, roughly coursed stone walls visible in the scarps on the west and south-east sides of the castle. All these wall alignments are located below the break of slope, and they may have slumped or slipped from an original, higher position.

### **Other features**

Three former quarries, represented by large, well-defined circular and rectangular earthwork scoops, have been dug out of the west side of the ridge, to the north of the main castle area. These are likely to have been sandstone quarries - several others are marked on the Ordnance Survey 1856 1st edition 6" map (sheet 88) just to the north-east - and they may have been the source of stone used for building the castle.

Finally, a small shallow platform ("l") is located on sloping ground to the north of the presumed barbican, overlooking the main path or track which enters the castle area from the north. As the area is wooded, this feature might represent a large tree hole, but it could also be a small lookout platform guarding the entrance on this side of the ridge, similar to that ("b") seen on the south side.

### **INTERPRETATIVE DISCUSSION**

There was previously some doubt about the site of Hood Castle, but the detailed earthwork survey has firmly established that it was sited on the prominent and easily defensible ridge of Hood Hill overlooking the western escarpment of the Hambleton Hills, as suggested by Whitaker (1970). The nature and location of the encircling ditch suggests that the monument did not originate as a small prehistoric hillfort or enclosure, as some authors have implied (eg. Wright 1968, 1002), although this cannot be totally discounted at this time.

The size of the artificially-levelled hilltop suggests that the castle was never very large, although it does have some impressive defences, both natural and man-made. The topography of the ridge ensures that all movement was restricted to a north-south axis, and the main approach from the north seems to have been protected by a probable barbican structure or gatehouse. This structure may be represented by a U-shaped c.8m square earthwork ("e"), and the open east



end might be explained by an arched sallyport, entrance or drain. Alternatively, all the earthworks in this part of the site may be one slightly bigger structure, in which case features "d" and "e" could be individual rooms. A bridge or angled ramp only c.10m long would have been sufficient to gain access into the main castle compound across the adjacent ditch; the bank on the south side of the ditch contains a large amount of stone, and there may have been a gate in the curtain wall here. The southern side of the castle was protected by the main defensive ditch, which continues around the west, and a secondary rock-cut ditch excavated across the ridge-top approach further to the south.

The main area of the castle is made up of several levelled platforms or enclosures ("g", "h", "i" and "j"), which probably combine to form one or more baileys either side of the slightly higher motte ("f"). The earthworks within the motte may represent a rectangular building measuring c.10m by c.6m, with an attached or separate tower-like structure on the south side and a small, open triangular courtyard to the east. The rock-cut enclosure ("k") in the north-east quarter might be a quarry and/or rain-filled water tank, as there is no other obvious water supply within the defended area. The remains of a now slumped outer curtain wall can be seen in the less steep slopes to the west.

The documentary references imply that the castle originated in the early 12th century, with a further phase of rebuilding or enhancement in the mid 13th century when a licence to crenellate was granted. These two phases can also be suggested by the earthworks. The original 12th century (or earlier) castle may be represented by the motte ("f") and the attendant southern bailey ("g"), while the other platforms and enclosures to the north might be later additions. The prominent terrace and ditch ("c") which runs around the south and west side of the castle, may originally have extended across the northern part of the ridge, and it was into this area that the barbican structure or gatehouse ("e") was subsequently built. The defensive ditch ("a") to the south of the main complex also appears to be an afterthought, and this may represent the "dyke" recorded in the mid 13th century licence to crenellate.

At its height, the castle would therefore have comprised a separate barbican or gatehouse to the north, a bailey to the south surrounded on the north, west and south sides by a curtain wall (it is not known whether it continued around to the east), a motte and smaller bailey at the south end, and a further defensive ditch to the south. Within the main bailey, buildings would have been positioned either side of a central passage or courtyard, and there seems to have been a second, smaller inner courtyard adjacent to the motte structure(s). This layout is obviously designed to fit within the constraints of the steep-sided north-south ridge, and there are similarities in plan form with other larger promontory castles such as Chepstow. There are also very close parallels with the plan of the 11th to early 14th century structures at Okehampton Castle in Devon (Higham 1999).

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## Cawthorn Camps 2000 – Interim Report

By Pete Wilson and Graham Lee

### Introduction.

Following the trial excavations in 1999 a further season of excavation took place as part of the joint English Heritage Centre for Archaeology and North York Moors National Park project (*Ryedale Historian* 20, 5-8 for previous work).

The objectives of the excavation were to try and further elucidate the structural sequence and phasing of the site and to provide data that would assist in site management, with particular emphasis on the erosion problems arising from visitor use. Seven trenches were excavated (Trenches 4-10 on Fig 1).

### The excavation

*Trench 4* was located in Annexe B on the east side of Fort A. A sub-rectangular turf-walled building aligned east-west was examined (Plate 1). It was c 8x6.7m overall, had rounded corners at the eastern end and the west end was either open, or had comprised a wall of timber or other material that did not survive into the archaeological record. The turf-walled structure had a shallow foundation-trench underlying its southern wall which, presumably, represented part of an earlier structure. A hearth, or furnace was found within the turf-walled building and this produced an

archaeomagnetic date of AD30 to AD105 @68% confidence, or 40BC to AD125 @95% confidence.

*Trench 5* was located within Fort A and was positioned to examine a further turf-walled building. This structure was c 7x4.4m and aligned east-west, with a probably entrance in its southern side fronting onto a possible street identified by Ed Dennison Archaeological Services during topographic survey funded by the North York Moors National Park (results not shown on Fig 1). The turf structure was the earliest in a sequence of two or three buildings. The second phase of construction was represented by *in situ* daub with clear evidence of stake-holes for wattles (Plate 2). It is currently not clear if the wattle and daub represents a separate phase of construction, or was inserted as a lining to the turf walls. The final building survived as shallow foundation trenches filled with local stone and associated with a rough stone floor. Some Romanised pottery was found outside the building, along with hand-made pottery, while three melon beads came from the interior.

*Trenches 6 and 7* were positioned on the northern and western ramparts of Fort A and were designed to compare the badly eroded northern rampart with the better preserved western one, the latter being 4.6m wide and 1.45m high. Both trenches produced clear evidence of two phases of rampart, an earlier one of dumped construction associated with a palisade trench, with a capping of clay representing the later phase (Plate 3). Three small oven bases were located cut into the rear of the northern rampart. They were

apparently sheltered by a short turf bank within the interior of the fort that was aligned parallel with the rampart. A further oven was found behind the western rampart. Two of the northern ovens have given archaeomagnetic dates of AD30 to AD 105 @ 68% confidence, or 20BC to AD125 @ 95% confidence. and, less certainly, about 100BC to AD110 @68% confidence, or about 200BC to AD 150 @95% confidence. The ditches were up to c 5.5m wide and 2m



Plate 1. The turf-walled building within Annexe B (Trench 4) under excavation.





Fig 1. Plan of Cawthorn Camps showing the location of the trenches excavated in 1999 (Trenches 1-3) and in 2000 (Trenches 4-10)

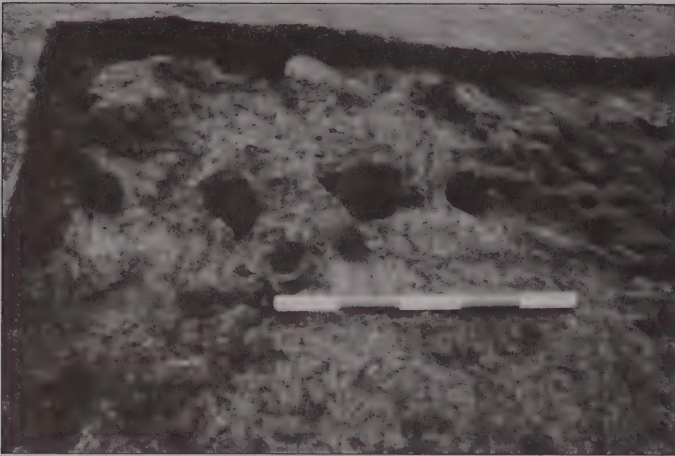


Plate 2. Spread of daub associated with the first or second building in Trench 5 within Fort A. The line of four stake holes represent major uprights within the wattle and daub structure.

deep, and appeared to be of a single phase. Neither of them contained any silt, but were back-filled with rampart material, suggesting that they had been re-cut or cleaned-out for the second phase of occupation which must have been of a short duration. Both ramparts were constructed over a leached-out buried soil which sealed a substantial ditch (c 2.80m wide and 0.6m deep) under the north rampart (Plate 4) and a large pit under the western rampart. These later features provide evidence of pre-Roman occupation to go with the probable barrow within the fort and the quantities of flint found across the site.

Trench 8 was located in the northern part of Fort D in an area known to have been ploughed in the 1920s. It was demonstrated that the ploughing had disturbed the area to a depth of 0.35m and removed all archaeological features in the area investigated.

Trench 9 was located in Fort D away from the known area of ploughing, but there was little *in situ* archaeology, other than a few small pits. Quantities of disturbed stone at the northern end of the trench suggest that a structure may have been located nearby. The agency of destruction in this part of the site is not certain, although there was clear evidence of tree damage with

both modern stumps, representing the latest phase of woodland regeneration, and an earlier tree-throw hole.

Trench 10 was located on the defences of Fort D where they cut away those of Camp C. As in the case of Fort A, two phases of rampart were recognised although without any evidence of palisade trenches, or other structural features. the earlier phase was of dumped construction, largely utilising ditch upcast. The second phase was constructed of turf and incorporated large numbers of clearly defined turves (Plate 5). Overall the rampart survived to a height of 1.5m and was 5m wide. The inner ditch proved to be of four phases and was up to 1.35m deep, with the widest phase being 1.5m across. The outer ditch was single phase and 1.1m deep and 3.4m wide. It seems likely that

the outer ditch related to the second phase of the fort. If so this provides some support for the suggestion that the first phase of Fort D remained in use when Camp C was constructed, as the plan of the camp allowed access to the east gate of the fort to be maintained (Welfare and Swan 1995,140). Upcast from both ditches was used to heighten the berm between them turning the ditches into more formidable obstacles. A modern trench, probably associated with Second World War military training on the site, was found cut into the berm close to the inner edge of the outer ditch. In addition, spent .303



Plate 3. The partially excavated first phase palisade trench associated with the western rampart of Fort A (Trench 7). The second phase rampart material has been removed from above and in front of the palisade trench.





Plate 4. The northern rampart of Fort A (Trench 6) showing the underlying layer of leached turf and a narrow cut into the prehistoric ditch sealed by the turf layer.

cartridges were found in the inner ditch. The rampart of Camp C was shown to be of simple dumped construction, 3.3m wide and 0.6m high.

### Findings

The assemblage from Trenches 4-7 was limited and therefore in line with our discoveries in 1999 and the results of Sir Ian Richmond's in the 1920s (Richmond 1932). In addition to the spent cartridges some 30 sherds of pottery, 81 flints, 3 melon beads, two glass fragments, one iron nail, 15 pieces of stone and one box of daub make up the finds archive from the 2000 season. In addition we have quantities of environment material and a number of small charcoal samples from which it is hoped to get AMS (14 C) dates.

The project is now going through assessment and an Updated Project Design for analysis will be developed with a view to publication in a national journal. A paper on the management aspects of the project will appear in *Preserving Archaeological Remains in situ 2* due for publication in 2002 (Lee and Wilson *forthcoming*).

### Acknowledgements

It is appropriate to thank the excavation team who coped admirably with the worst that the October storms could throw at us

and we can testify that the site is very picturesque under snow. In addition the Ryedale Folk Museum kindly afforded us space to undertake finds and environmental processing and Malton Museum have generously allowed access to the Cawthorn material that they hold from Sir Ian Richmond's excavations. Logistical support from the North York Moors National Park was invaluable throughout the project. Figure 1 was prepared by Vince Griffin of the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology Graphics Studio.

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Graham Lee - North York Moors National Park, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, YO62 5BP.

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Plate 5. The second phase rampart of Fort D under excavation in Trench 10. The individual turves used in the construction of the rampart are clearly seen.

## West Heslerton - the Anglian Cemetery

By Christine Houghton and Dominic Powlesland,  
Landscape Research Centre, Archaeological  
Monograph Series, No. 1

Two volumes, vol i, 196 pp, 75 figs., 55 pls., 33 tables; vol ii, 376 pp, and catalogue of 575 graves; ISBN 0 9537488 0 4 (English Heritage 1999); price £35.00

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West Heslerton is the site of a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery (the subject of this review) and an associated settlement of 16 ha, which is now being prepared for publication. The cemetery complex lies on either side of the A64 trunk road from Malton to Scarborough, on the south side of the Vale of Pickering, in the lee of the chalk Wolds. The excavation of cemetery and settlement has been proceeding since 1977, when the first Anglo-Saxon burial turned up in Cook's sand quarry. The whole project is the largest excavation ever done in NE Yorkshire; the publication of the cemetery is a major event, of much interest to anyone interested in the Anglo-Saxon archaeology and history of our area. It is likely to become a work of international interest, as one of the handful of Anglo-Saxon places where the settlement and its cemetery have been examined; because of the advanced methods of excavation, recording and analysis used, and of the remarkable techniques used in publishing these volumes.

Field, aerial and electronic survey have shown that West Heslerton is one of several such settlements on the south side of the Vale, all with long histories of human settlement. West Heslerton itself has a dense agglomeration of prehistoric features. Barrows and other ritual features do indeed determine the location of the cemetery, as nuclei for the Anglo-Saxon (Anglian) graves.

The settlement was set up by a stream, in an area where there were already stone Roman buildings: neither an obvious villa nor a temple, but rather unusual structures of the 4th century, around a prolific spring and large well. This has been argued to be a shrine, whose location and probably ritual significance was respected in the post-Roman centuries.

The earliest phases of the Anglian settlement were of the later-5th to earlier 7th century, associated with the cemetery now published. Traditionally, the numerous such cemeteries in East Yorkshire and beyond have been regarded as essentially pagan in their burial rites,

and as of people migrating to the eastern part of England from the continental 'homelands' of Holland, Germany and Scandinavia; killing or enslaving the people they encountered, or forcing them to flee to the western parts of Britain and Brittany.

Modern historians and archaeologists of a radical disposition have begun to question these apparently self-evident explanations, which are based on written sources (e.g. Lucy 2000). They believe the continental immigrants were relatively few, but influential in spreading their fashions in jewellery, clothing, and burial rites among what were essentially British inhabitants, with whom they were fused in the customary manner! Certainly the authors of these volumes support the idea that the West Heslerton community were a mixed ethnic group, with possibly *some* elite families which may have claimed ancestral origins on the other side of the North Sea; the others (perhaps most) were descendants of the local Romano-British people; indeed, there is some evidence of two distinctive physical types among the skeletons. Some of the local people may (in Lucy's view) have been Christians, living peaceably with devotees of the gods of the northern pantheon. Another 'self-evident' point that is now being questioned, in a few cases, is that graves with weapons (shield-boss, spear etc.) are not always of males; and that, conversely, graves with jewellery, beads etc. can be male!

The settlement itself continued through to the later 9th century, with hundreds of buildings and other features dated over four-five centuries. It is not known where the dead of the later 7th, 8th and 9th centuries were buried. It is tempting to believe that the community had set up a Christian cemetery and church under the influence of the evangelising monasteries of the north side of the Vale, an area where 'pagan' burials are rare.

After that introductory preamble, we may turn to the cemetery under review. Although large by English standards (some 200 excavated burials), the graves comprise the greater part of the original cemetery, which may have been of c 300 burials. The remainder include a few destroyed by sand-quarrying, and many destroyed by (or surviving under) the A64 carriageway. Those excavated, nevertheless, are likely to be representative of the whole, adequate for most analyses. Certain final questions remain unanswered, such as whether there were in the missing part ritual structures or another nuclei. There may, for instance, have been an especially rich grave assemblage, which could undermine the generally egalitarian impression that one gets from the evidence of the other graves and settlement.



As noted above, there are major prehistoric barrows and features among the Anglian graves. Eleven Neolithic and Bronze Age graves are published in these volumes. The authors conclude that 'the relationship between the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery and earlier prehistoric ritual and funerary site .... may reflect a desire to legitimise .... the emerging "Anglo-Saxon" society within the context of the prehistoric rather than the Roman past.'

The finds in the graves are in general very similar to those in the numerous cemeteries of this period in the Wolds, north into Cleveland, and south into eastern England. These are usually classified as 'Anglian' in contrast to those in the southeastern parts of the country (called Saxon, Jutish, etc.). The finds comprise the usual clothing decoration and status accessories, such as beads, brooches and wrist-clasps; pottery, knives, spears, shields and residues of textiles and wooden vessels.

The skeletons were in very variable condition from stains to well-preserved bones; most (180) were inhumations but there were also eleven cremations. Orientations of graves were diverse. There is evidence of graves being marked (there was little inter-cutting) and there is probably some grouping of graves representing kin - or other relationships. There was also an animal grave: of a young mare with bridle parts, who had been decapitated, the head being placed between her legs; this may have been associated with a nearby male (human!) skeleton, with spear and shield.

Although most of the features and finds of the graves can be paralleled by those in other eastern cemeteries as we have noted, the exceptional features of this report which set it far above other reports is the sophistication of the excavation and recording, the computer-assisted analysis of the data, and the very high quality of the publication itself.

In excavation, many of the grave-groups were lifted as soil blocks. This allowed them to be dissected in laboratory conditions with accordingly high levels of recovery of fragile materials of metal and textile. The bulk of the data were recorded using hand-held computers in the field, and plotted electronically. This vastly increased the potential for statistical analysis

and cross-referencing, and will be invaluable when the time comes for integration with the massive data set from the settlement.

The report is very well produced in two hard-back volumes. One is concerned with the site topography, the prehistoric structures and finds, discussion of the cemetery as a whole, and detailed sections on the grave goods by class and type. The second comprises the detailed graves catalogue of the burials, finds and human biology. Each grave has its own section on one or more pages including a photograph of each grave, plan and summary of the skeletal data, and statistics, with superb drawings, photographs and x-rays of all objects. We have thus all the information on each grave conveniently in one place, not scattered among specialist reports and 'find chapters'. Especially brilliant are the plans in colour, and the finds drawings done not by the usual ink shading and stippling techniques, but in half-tone *pencil*, nowadays possible with digitising technology. My only criticism is a personal one - I find some of the computer-generated lettering not very aesthetically pleasing, or sometimes too small for my ageing eyes to read.

The major problem however is that this report is *too* good! To produce volumes of this quality needed a major input of time, and a scale of skill and computer resources beyond the reach of most organisations; making other cemetery reports, such as ours on Sewerby and Cannington, look rather steam-age. But West Heslerton, by setting up such standards, indicates the quality that is possible, and should help other organisations to apply pressures for resources and funds to do likewise: *if* a cemetery is to be tackled. This work is a landmark both for cemetery excavation and publication, and archaeology in our part of the country. Haughton and Powlesland are to be congratulated on their achievement, and English Heritage who have consistently and generously financed them.

Philip Rahtz

#### Reference

Lucy 2000 Sam Lucy, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Sutton Publishing, Stroud)



## **Eight centuries of milling in North East Yorkshire**

John K. Harrison; North York Moors National Park Authority. 2001, £18.50.

This publication is the culmination of many years of research into the history of milling in North East Yorkshire; the author is a founder member of the Cleveland Industrial Archaeological Society and of the Cleveland Buildings Preservation Trust, and has been actively involved in the preservation and restoration of several old mills.

Water-powered corn-mills replaced the primitive but effective hand-operated stone querns which are occasionally ploughed up or found built into walls. At an early date the householder was required by law to abandon the quern and take grain to the parish corn-mill for grinding into flour, the mill generally being owned by the lord of the manor who levied a tithe for the privilege – a nice little earner. Water mills were established before the Norman Conquest and the author lists several that were recorded in the Domesday Survey in the North Riding. The Norman church and village corn-mill were common features in most Post-Conquest settlements. Tower wind-mills were established at a much later date.

In his book John Harrison surveys the sites, buildings and machinery of corn-mills, providing detailed scale drawings and photographs of about one hundred mills in the region. A gazetteer gives details of over one hundred and fifty water-mills and seventy windmills with descriptions of sites and surviving remains. For instance, Coulton Mill north of Hovingham, is given a grid reference and classified as complete. The history of the mill is charted from its probable foundation in the early Norman period when it belonged to Byland Abbey; the Fairfaxes of Gilling gained possession of the mill after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth century, installing an overfall wheel at their corn-mill before 1721. Numerous occupants are mentioned by name; an inventory of 1932 provides details of the milling machinery and the author gives a detailed account of the building and machinery at the time of his recent survey. The text is illustrated with three scale drawings of the mill buildings and machinery; the comprehensive study is completed with a photograph of the mill during its working days in the early years of the twentieth century. Each and every mill in the region is treated in similar fashion.

Among the more interesting snippets of milling history are the following: - Kildale Mill (now demolished) – at an assize of 1321 the miller, John,

son of Arnald, was unable to pay one mark rent arrears because at Michaelmas the mill was totally destroyed by a flood, and he was destroyed by the Scots and then because he was captured and imprisoned by them and then because he paid a ransom to them was a pauper and could not rebuild the mill for the next two years (milling was obviously a hazardous occupation in the early days of the millennium); Seamer Mill (demolished) - in 1407 John Legg accused William Colynson of withdrawing with his corn to various mills, grinding it outside the demesne and not making the accustomed suit to the lord's mill; Scarborough Mill on Falsgrave Beck (demolished) - when Scarborough was in the King's hands in 1314-15 the burgesses begged for an inquiry as to which of the mills lately built by them at their own expense in the town belonged to them and which the king whilst in 1660-61 the inhabitants knew of only one wind-mill pulled down in the Civil War and three ancient water corn-mills at which before the War all the inhabitants were, in theory, obliged to grind their corn; Rosedale Mill (demolished) – 1844 on 23 August a young man was killed at a fulling-mill at Rosedale. He was perching a blocking or wooden warp, when by some means the piece caught him, taking him with it on the flywheel, wrapping his whole body within its fold, except his legs which were left sticking out one side, and which were consequently entangled in the machinery and both broken; and finally Cropton Mill (complete - Grade II) - 1928 - formerly a good business but its position at the bottom of Cropton Bank and the bad road makes it difficult for motors to reach it. Large iron overshot wheel. In the great flood of September 1927 water rose to 16 feet and came through the mill and house at 3.30 a.m. Set wheel in motion but luckily it got blocked by a piece of timber. These extracts show that the occupation of miller was not always the stress-free existence in idyllic pastoral surroundings as depicted by artists and poets.

In his foreword to the book the author's mentor Alan Stoyel, states that the work pulls together the evidence, not only of the architecture but also the working parts, the historical references and the archaeology in an analytical way that has broken new ground to produce a balanced in-depth study.

It is an absorbing, very readable book and should be in the reference section of the bookshelf of everyone with an interest in learning more about a traditional and essential occupation in our countryside during the last millennium.

Robin Wardell



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